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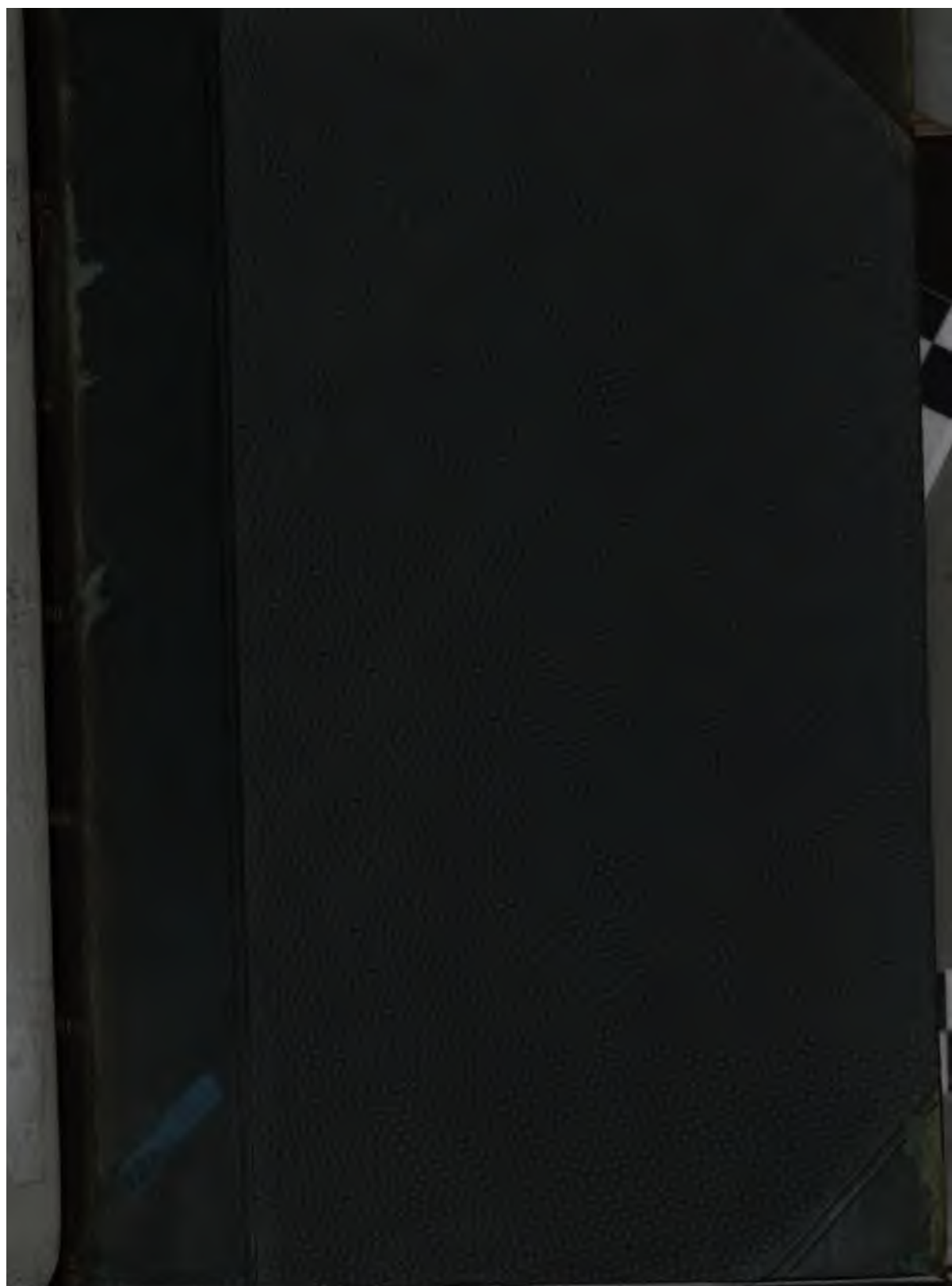
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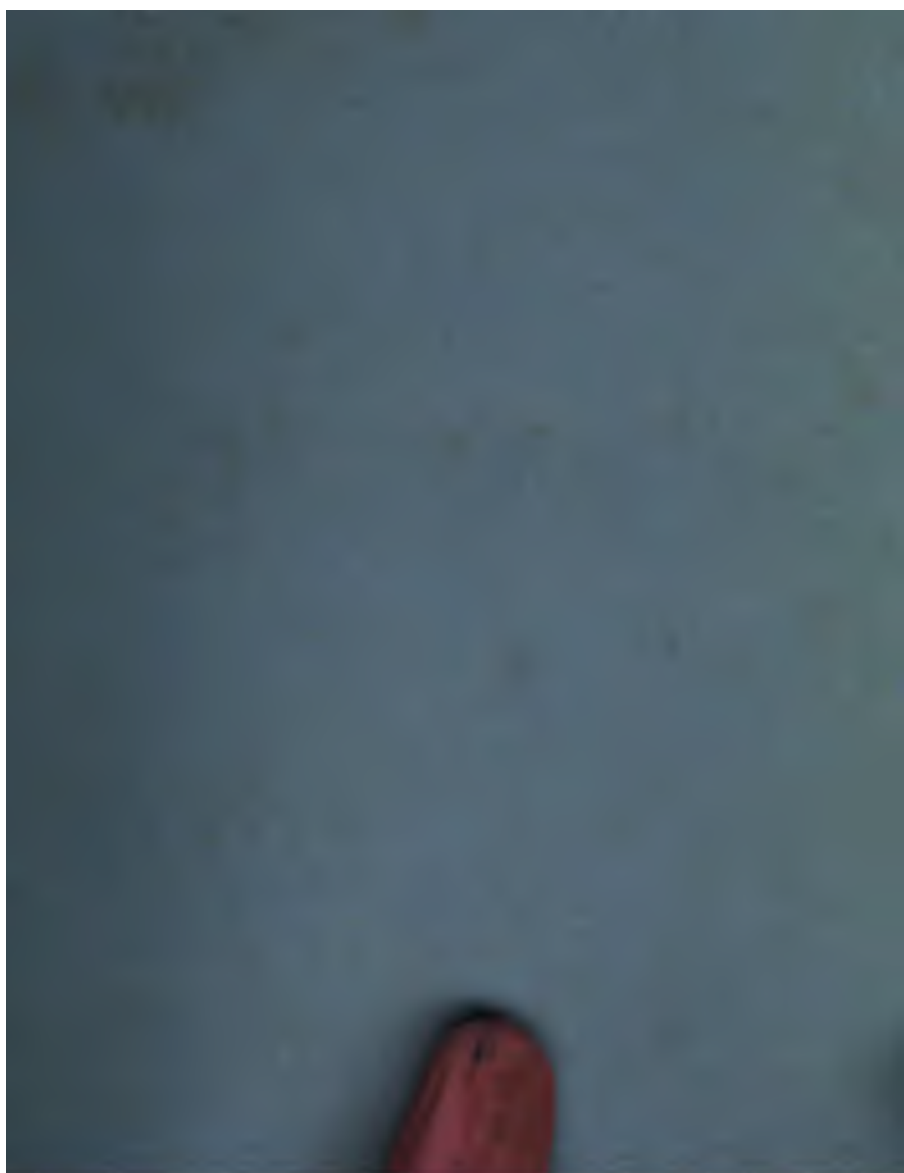
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Louis Inard, del.

W. A. Cranston. sc.

"O, IF WE COULD ALWAYS I.

& CRIED.



BELGRAVIA

A LONDON MAGAZINE

CONDUCTED BY

M. E. BRADDON

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' 'AURORA FLOYD,' ETC. ETC.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Alabama Gossip	198
American Press, The	101
April Fools	182
At Dinner	440
Breech-loaders and their Inventors	325
Church Music	284
Enthusiasm v. Impediment	122
Few Days' Fishing, A	492
Fijian Newspaper, A	465
Go-a-head Girls. A discursive Chapter on Transatlantic Floriculture	347
How I came to fail in Literature	290
How I got Pepper	209
How the 'Gadfly' failed. A Newspaper Episode	54
Imaginary London. A delusive Directory:	
II. The Wiggery and Old Buck-street, W.	38
III. Brain-street, E.C.	169
IV. Rafaele-place and St. Guido's-wood	306
v. Little Shako-street and the Junior Frogbelt	453
Milk-and-Water-coloured Elysium	318
My First Duel	481
My Grandfather's Ghost-Story	113
Old Wine in New Bottles	189
Poems:	
April	208
Easter Lifting, The	197
Est procul hinc tellus	99
Forgotten	53
Hawthorn Tree, The	404
Hebe of mine Inn, The	100
June Memory, A	452
Love's Castaway	469
May-dew Morning	324
Nature's Jewels	168
Night Voyage, The	181
Theoria	131
Poor James Wymper	293
Some Curious Old Customs	50
Tedious Treat, A	177
Three to One; or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple:	
Chap. XXIV. Lord and Lady Pennyroyal and Mr. Sonderling	69
XXV. Florry tries to guess at something	77
XXVI. Florry and Amicia both succeed in finding out something	82
XXVII. Lady Sweetapple sings	89
XXVIII. How they all went to Bed	95
XXIX. Lord Pennyroyal on Hats	213
XXX. In the Shade by the River's Bank	216
XXXI. Miss Edith Price	226
XXXII. In which there are some Explanations	236

Three to One (<i>continued</i>):	PAGE
Chap. XXXIII. Amicia and Mr. Sonderling	242
XXXIV. Edith Price puts in an Advertisement	245
XXXV. The Walking Party at High Beech	252
XXXVI. As Dull as Ditch-water	357
XXXVII. Mr. Sonderling's Wedding-clothes, and Mr. Beeswing on Dinners	364
XXXVIII. In which Mr. Beeswing continues his 'History of Di- gestion'	371
XXXIX. Dancing after Dinner	380
XL. Sir Thomas and Lady Carlton consult	389
XLI. Edith Price's Advertisement	395
XLII. Lord Pennyroyal on Debts and Washing	501
XLIII. Harry and Edward leave High Beech	509
XLIV. Harry and Edward and the Prices	514
XLV. How they got on at High Beech	523
XLVI. Harry and Edward take Edith and Mary to Church	528
XLVII. How they spent the Sunday at High Beech	538
To the Bitter End:	
Chap. V. Mr. Walgrave indulges his Social Instincts	5
VI. Grace discovers a Likeness	12
VII. 'If it could always be To-day!'	17
VIII. 'Recal her Tears, to thee at parting given'	23
IX. 'Ae fond kiss, and then we sever'	31
X. Mr. Walgrave is satisfied with himself	133
XI. On Duty	138
XII. Harcross and Vallery	144
XIII. 'The Shows of Things are better than themselves'	150
XIV. Mr. Walgrave relieves his mind	157
XV. 'Dost thou look back on what hath been?'	261
XVI. 'But if thou mean'st not well'	269
XVII. Beyond his Reach	277
XVIII. Mr. Walgrave is translated	405
XIX. Richard Redmayne's Return	411
XX. 'What is it that you would impart to me?'	425
Transatlantic Sports and Sporting Matters. A Chapter on Uncle Sam's Diversions	471

ILLUSTRATIONS

'O, if we could always live here!' she cried	Drawn by <i>Louis Huard</i>	Frontispiece
Forgotten	<i>E. Wagner</i>	53
Lady Sweetapple presses her Inquiry	<i>J. A. Pasquier</i>	88
The Hebe of mine Inn	<i>Thomas Gray</i>	100
Mr. Walgrave invites himself to Dinner	<i>Louis Huard</i>	143
The Night Voyage	<i>E. Wagner</i>	181
Easter Lifting	<i>C. J. Staniland</i>	197
Edith Price	<i>J. A. Pasquier</i>	235
'But my Father—You will place me right in his sight?'	<i>Louis Huard</i>	274
The Retort Discourteous	<i>C. O. Murray</i>	301
May-dew Morning	<i>C. J. Staniland</i>	324
A Discussion on the Subject of Sugar	<i>J. A. Pasquier</i>	359
A Vow of Vengeance	<i>Louis Huard</i>	439
A June Memory	<i>C. O. Murray</i>	452
Love's Castaway	<i>E. Wagner</i>	469
M. Sonderling reflects	<i>J. A. Pasquier</i>	543

BELGRAVIA

MARCH 1872

TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER V. MR. WALGRAVE INDULGES HIS SOCIAL INSTINCTS.

AFTER that Sunday evening, Mr. Walgrave became more or less one of the family at Brierwood. He did not take too much advantage of his privileges, for he spent his days for the most part in rambles far afield, and devoted his evenings to hard reading; but there were odd half hours in every day, and some friendly hour in every evening, which he spent under the cedar, or in the family parlour, talking to Grace, looking over her music, examining her little stock of books, and taking breath, as it were, after a long spell of law. Altogether he was so unobtrusive that Mrs. James could find no ground for complaint, and considered as a lodger he was simply perfection. He had insisted on less ceremony and trouble about his dinner—that there should be nothing but a cold joint and a salad, or a chop, ready for him at half-past seven, instead of the elaborate six-o'clock banquet which Mrs. James had supposed indispensable. About half-past nine, the family supper-time, he took a large cup of strong tea, and was ready for his nightly reading when the household went to bed. But for the one hour between this late dinner and tea he gave himself up entirely to the delights of the summer twilight and the garden, talking agriculture with uncle James under the cedar, or strolling beside the borders with Grace as she trimmed her roses, and snipped off the withered flowers with a formidable pair of garden scissors. She was quite at her ease with him now, and had already learnt a good deal by this association—had extended her reading into a wider field under his guidance. He had sent to London for a little packet of books for her—Mrs. Browning and Adelaide Procter, and other modern lights, whereof she had known nothing before his coming.

The summer was exceptionally fine. Day after day the sun

shone out of a cloudless heaven; the corn grew tall on the undulating land about Brierwood; and James Redmayne, who declared that in England drought never bred naught, was well content with the unvarying succession of brilliant days. Mr. Walgrave had been five weeks in this seclusion, his rural life only broken by an occasional journey to London, to see one or two important solicitors, and let them know that he was not going to remain much longer out of harness. He had not many duties of a social character to detain him in town. The London season was over, and most of his friends were away—the Acropolis-square people, Mr. Vallory and his daughter, in Germany—so he never stayed more than one day away from the farm. That Kentish air was setting him up wonderfully. His doctor, on whom he called while he was in London, declared himself astounded by the improvement.

‘You are taking my advice, I can see,’ he said, ‘and giving that overworked brain of yours a thorough rest.’

Mr. Walgrave did not take the trouble to undeceive him. No; he was not giving his brain a holiday by any means. He had a case coming on late in the year in which he hoped to make a great success, to lift himself above the ruck at once and for ever by his conduct of this one trial, and he was cramming himself vigorously for this encounter; but the hard work seemed unusually light to him, his life was brighter and pleasanter than it had ever been. This jaded man of the world could not have believed a country life would have suited him so well.

He had made a complete circuit of the country within twenty miles of Brierwood, exploring every gentleman’s seat and every ruin accessible to the tourist, with a single exception. That was Clevedon. One morning, loitering by the open window of the common parlour, where Grace had been practising, while Mrs. James sat absorbed in the profound study of some marital garment that stood in need of serious repair, he proposed that they should make a party and go to see Clevedon together.

‘You know the place, and you know Wort,’ he said; ‘we can arrange for him to meet us at the house and show us everything. Why shouldn’t we make a rough-and-ready picnic of it?—take a cold dinner, and dine in the room where Sir Lucas Clevedon entertained the Prince Regent. I haven’t had a picnic since I’ve been here; and I remember when I was a lad, and spent my midsummer holidays at a farm in Norfolk, they gave me at least half-a-dozen picnics. I have to complain of a want of hospitality on your part, Mrs. Redmayne, in this respect.’

Grace laughed a low happy laugh, and even aunt Hannah’s hard features relaxed into a smile, as she paused from the solemn consideration as to whether a patch under the arm or a new binder would be the wiser.

'Lord bless you, Mr. Walgry, as if a gentleman like you could care about such picnics as we could give! You'd want a brass band and a markwee, and a bus-and-four, I should think, before you'd call anything a picnic!'

'My dear Mrs. Redmayne, I want a roast leg of lamb, a salad, and a bottle of sherry, packed in a basket. I want you and your family to come with me, and I daresay we shall enjoy our dinner as much as ever the Prince Regent enjoyed his, though Sir Lucas Clevedon's cook may have been one of the greatest artists of his time.'

Aunt Hannah hesitated a little, gave a sharp glance at her niece—was it on *her* account the barrister was so friendly?—but on the whole had not much to urge against Mr. Walgrave's proposal. It would be very rude to oppose any desire of such a model lodger's; so modest a wish too, and one which was in itself a condescension.

'Well, sir, if you'd like to spend a day at Clevedon with James and me and Grace and her cousins, I've nothing to say against it,' she said, 'except that it doesn't seem the sort of thing a gentleman like you would care for. We're very homely people, you see, and—'

'You're very pleasant people, Mrs. Redmayne. Believe me, I wish for no better society.'

He stole a glance at Grace, who was intently studying a page in her music-book. He could not see her eyes, but there was a happy smile upon the rosy lips, which betokened that the idea of the picnic was not unwelcome to her.

'Shall we say to-morrow, then? The less time we lose the better, for fear this splendid weather should change.'

'No fear of that, sir,' replied aunt Hannah, who had been planning the picnic dinner, and calculating what time she should want for its preparation. She meant that it should be something more elaborate than a leg of lamb and a salad. 'Say the day after to-morrow,' she said.

'The day after to-morrow, then—and you'll arrange with Wort; or I can walk over this afternoon and settle the thing with him, if you like.'

'Just as you please, Mr. Walgry. I'm sure John Wort will be ready to do anything you wish.'

'Yes,' answered the lodger, in his lazy way, 'Wort has always stood my friend.'

'He's known you a long time, sir, he said,' hazarded Mrs. James, who was not without some feminine curiosity about the stranger's antecedents.

'He has known me all my life, ma'am,' Mr. Walgrave answered gravely.

Grace looked up from *her* music with great wistful eyes. In all

his free-and-easy talk about himself he had never spoken of father or mother, home or childhood. That allusion to a holiday spent in Norfolk just now was the first hint he had ever given them of his boyish history; and Grace, who had so little to do except to wonder, had spent many an idle hour wondering about him.

Mr. Walgrave dropped in upon the steward on his return from a long ramble. He was getting just a little tired of those lonely wanderings, and more inclined to dawdle away his day in the Brierwood garden and orchard. A comfortable place for reading in, that orchard. He had brought down some of his favourite authors—Montaigne and Burton, Sterne and De Quincey—books taken at random from the crowded shelves in his chambers—books that a man may read for ever and ever; and he had sent to the London Library for a box of newer literature—the last volumes of Froude and Motley, the newest thing in metaphysics, a dark-blue octavo filled with questionable verse, the latest French novel. Provided with these, he found the delights of the orchard inexhaustible; and to lie stretched at full length upon the short mossy grass, with a little shower of unripe apples fluttering down upon him ever and anon, a repose as sweet as the slumbers of Achilles on the lap of Helen, in that enchanted isle whither those two were wafted after the end of Troy.

The steward was quite ready to oblige him, but wondered a little at this picnic business, and at Mr. Walgrave's condescension.

'I shouldn't have thought it was in your line,' he said.

'Nothing is in my line, my dear Wort, except hard work. But it is such a new thing for me to take a holiday, that I'm shaken out of my normal self, as it were, and eager for any kind of rustic amusement. These people are uncommonly friendly, and I've quite fraternised with them lately. I really didn't know man was such a gregarious animal. I thought with books and fly-fishing I should not have the least need of human society; and in a week or ten days I began to cultivate these worthy Redmaynes. "Man was not made to live alone." The day after to-morrow, then, Wort. You'll meet us at the old house, I suppose?'

'Well, yes, I can meet you there, if you like. Or say at the south lodge; that's the nearest to Brierwood; and I can take you by a short cut through the park. But you went over the house two years ago, from garret to cellar. I shouldn't have thought you'd have cared to see it again.'

'Shouldn't you? I have a fancy for the neglected old place, you see. I'm not going to peer and pry into every hole and corner as I did last time, when I wanted to arrive at a fair estimate of Sir Francis Clevedon's heritage.' These last words were said with some touch of bitterness, as if this man were not above the low vice of

envy. 'I should like a nice long lazy day, prowling about the house and idling in the gardens.'

The wish seemed reasonable enough, and John Wort, who really desired to oblige Mr. Walgrave, had nothing to say against it.

The next day but one was another of those glorious summer days, with the thermometer at seventy-five in the shade and a cloudless blue sky. The corn was yellowing in the fields, as Hubert Walgrave and Grace Redmayne walked along the narrow pathways between the ripening grain and the tall wild-growing hedges. Mrs. James and her spouse lagged behind a little, tired with a day's work that had been compressed into half a day for the sake of this holiday. The young men brought up the rear, each with a basket, from which there came ever and anon a cool clooping noise, maddeningly suggestive of refreshing drinks imprisoned within the wicker.

Grace was dressed in some pale washed-out muslin that was almost white, with a broad straw-hat that shaded the delicate face, and from the shadow of which the dark-blue eyes shone out starlike. She seemed as joyous as the skylark singing high up in the blue vault above her, and was talking gaily, quite at her ease with the stranger now. Her brightness and intelligence delighted him. Of all the women he had talked to in that world which was his world, he had met none so rich in fancy, so quick to apprehend him, so entirely sympathetic, as this farmer's daughter.

'You ought to be a poet, Grace,' he said. He had not waited for any one's permission to call her by her Christian name—every one called her Grace—it seemed only natural that he should do like the rest. 'You ought to be a poet. Some of our sweetest and truest poets nowadays are women. Now mind, I shall be really angry, Grace, if ever I hear that you have married a farmer and settled down into a comfortable managing farmer's wife, like aunt Hannah.'

That milk-white skin of Grace's grew suddenly crimson, and the blue eyes flashed angrily. Miss Redmayne was by no means the sweetest tempered of young women.

'I shall never marry a farmer!' she exclaimed.

They were standing face to face at a stile where they had come to a pause, waiting for those stragglers behind to join them.

'Sha'n't you, do you think?' Mr. Walgrave asked, in his easiest manner; 'but why should you be so indignant with me for suggesting the possibility of such a thing? I look upon farming as the most halcyon state of existence. Your father is a farmer, your uncle and cousins are farmers; you live in an atmosphere of farmers, one may say. It is scarcely strange if I thought you might ultimately marry one.'

'I shall never marry a farmer,' said Grace, still with a touch of

anger in look and tone; 'I don't suppose I shall ever marry at all. I would much rather—'

She stopped abruptly with her sentence unfinished, and stood silently looking far off with fixed dreamy eyes.

'Much rather do what?'

'Go to my father in Australia, and lead a wild strange life with him.'

'Ah, you fancy that it would be Arcadian, poetic, and all that kind of thing. A roving forest life, among pathless woods and tropical flowers; and so on. But it wouldn't. It would be all rude and sordid; a hard perilous life, among men degraded by every vice that the greed of gain can foster. No, no, Grace, don't dream of Australia. Look forward to your father's return; cultivate your intellect, which is an exceptional one, and ten years hence England may be proud of Grace Redmayne.'

The girl sighed, and gave him no answer. He too was silent; more thoughtful than he had been all the morning.

It was a hot walk to Clevedon—through corn-fields for the greater part of the way, and then along half a mile of dusty high-road—and a delicious relief when they came to the south lodge, where they found Mr. Wort smoking an ante-prandial pipe in the shady rustic porch, with a stone bottle at his feet.

'I thought I'd bring something,' he said; 'so I mixed a jorum of milk-punch the day before yesterday, from a famous recipe given to me by Sir Lucas's old butler. It would have been all the better for keeping longer, but I don't think it's bad.'

'Lor, Mr. Wort, do you want to make us all tipsy?' remonstrated Mrs. James. 'I know what that milk-punch of Sir Lucas's is—you brought us half a gallon last harvest-home. It's the most dangerous stuff any one can put their lips to.'

Mr. and Mrs. Redmayne had a good deal to say to Mr. Wort; so those three led the way, the steward carrying his jar sturdily. The two young men scampered off to look for squirrels, and Grace and Mr. Walgrave followed at their leisure, stopping every now and then to admire some fine old tree of nobler growth than the rest, or the long ferny alleys leading off into a deeper woodland. On this side of the park the timber had escaped the devastations of Sir Lucas, who was very much of Sheridan's opinion, that timber is a natural excrescence for the payment of a man's debts. Many a noble oak and beech, elm and chestnut, had fallen under the woodman's axe during the spendthrift's tenure of Clevedon; but here the timber was of a less valuable character, and had been left to flourish even after that final clearing a few years ago, by means of which Mr. Wort had lightened the burdens on Sir Francis's estate.

Grace was somewhat silent, answering absently when Mr. Wal-

grave spoke to her—paler too than when they had begun their expedition. Her companion looked at her curiously, wondering what had caused the change, she had been so full of life and gaiety a quarter of an hour ago.

'So you are very fond of your father, Grace?' he said presently.

'Fond of my father?' she answered quickly, with a tremulous voice, and flashing a bright sudden look upon him which made her irresistibly beautiful. 'Why, there is no one in the world I love but him. I don't mean to say anything unkind or ungrateful about uncle James and aunt Hannah. They are very, very good to me, and I like them—love them even, with a kind of love. But my father—I love *him* with all my heart and soul. Why, do you know that for a year after he left us there was never a night that I did not see him in my dreams—hear the sound of his voice—feel the touch of his hand; never a morning that I did not wake disappointed to find he was so far away. The dreams have faded a little now, it is so long—so long since he left us, but I do not regret him less.'

'Have you any idea when he will return?'

'O, no. It may be a very long time, or a very short time. He promised not to stay longer than three years at the most; but I know he will not come back till he has succeeded in doing what he went to do.'

'To make a fortune, I suppose?'

'To earn enough money to pay every shilling he owes.'

'I wish him all prosperity, and I rather envy him his opportunities. Upon my word, if I thought gold were to be had for digging, I think I would buy a spade and go in for the same kind of thing. A professional career is such a slow road to fortune; and as to fame—if a man stops short of the woolsack, I doubt if there is anything he can do that will render him interesting to posterity. To be less than Lord Thurlow is to be nothing—and I don't suppose you ever heard of Thurlow. A poet now, be he ever so poor a creature, let him achieve but the smallest modicum of fame, has a place in the hearts of women for everlasting. I'll wager if you were asked which was the greater man, Kirke White or Brougham, you would swear by Kirke White, and you would think Letitia Landon a finer writer than Junius.'

'I am very fond of poetry,' Grace answered simply.

'Well, child, go on educating yourself by means of good solid reading, and you shall be a poet some day, like Miss Procter—a poet of the affections—all tenderness and sweetness and music. But you remember what Shelley says, "They learn in suffering what they teach in song." You will have to undergo that educational process in some way or other, I daresay—first girlish fancies

wasted on an unworthy object—blighted affection, and that sort of thing.'

The girl looked at him with another of those sudden flashes—this time all anger.

'Why do you talk to me like that?' she asked indignantly; 'as if I were the silliest creature in the world, and must needs fall in love with—with what you call an unworthy object. I never mean to love any one but my father. If all the books I have read are true—or half of them—love hardly ever brings anything but sorrow.'

'O yes, it does, Grace; gladness unspeakable sometimes—a renewal of youth—a sweet surprise—a revelation of a new world—the beginning of a fresh life,' said Mr. Walgrave, with an entire change of tone, and an earnestness that was very rare in him. 'Don't be angry with me for what I said just now, I was only half serious.'

CHAPTER VI.

GRACE DISCOVERS A LIKENESS.

THEY were nearly at the house by this time, and had emerged from the neglected woodland on to a wide lawn separated from the park by a ha-ha and a light iron fence. The rest of the party were waiting for them here, wiping their faces with voluminous pocket-handkerchiefs, and altogether in a melting condition. The old house stood before them; a noble building with a massive centre, wings spreading right and left, and at the end of each wing a short colonnade running at right angles with the building. Over the principal door, which was low and broad, there was a great oriel window, a window which was in itself a picture. The roof was masked by a cornice of delicate stonework, open and light, and rich in variety of design as old point-lace, and above this rose innumerable pinnacles of the flamboyant order.

'A fine old place,' said Mr. Walgrave, 'a noble background to any man's life. Hard that it should be abandoned to the rats and the spiders.'

'But it is not to belong to the rats much longer,' said Grace. 'Sir Francis will soon be coming home.'

'Perhaps,' answered Mr. Walgrave, with a thoughtful air. 'Who knows whether he may ever live to inhabit this place? I am no believer in restorations.'

Mr. Wort rang the bell, which was answered after a considerable interval by the superannuated butler who had seen the face of George the Fourth—a doddering old man with long gray hair, and weak faded blue eyes, dressed in threadbare black that had been cut by the minions of Stultz.

This old man brightened a little at sight of Mr. Wort, and stared curiously with his dim eyes at Hubert Walgrave. He was quite ready to show the house.

'I'm sure it's a pleasure to see you and your friends, Mr. Wort,' he said. 'My old woman and me, we get mazed-like, never seeing no other faces but our own, and the two girls, and the butcher once a week. If it wasn't that we're both fond of the place, for the sake of old times, I don't believe we *could* stand it. I suppose you'd like to go through all the best rooms,' he went on, opening one of the numerous doors in the great stone-paved hall, and ushering them into a long gloomy room hung with family portraits, and with a gigantic black-marble mantelpiece at the end—a mantelpiece with a massive pediment supported by twelve Corinthian columns, which looked like the entrance to a tomb. 'The ceilings in the upstairs rooms are ever so much worse since you saw them last,' continued the butler; 'the wet do come in so every time it rains—and we had some heavy rains in spring. As to the rats, I won't say anything about them. What they contrive to live upon, unless it's rotten wood and old plaster and each other, I can't understand; but live they do, and increase and multiply. This is James I.'s dining-room; so called because his majesty stayed at Clevedon at the time when he created the first baronet, and dined in this room every day at one o'clock, with Robert Carr Earl of Somerset on his left hand, and Sir John Clevedon on his right; and they do say Sir John was the handsomest man of the two. That's his portrait yonder, in the green-velvet suit.'

They all looked at the picture, as old Tristram Moles the butler pointed to it. Grace Redmayne had seen the portrait before; but at sight of it to-day she gave a little start, and a faint cry of surprise.

'Why, what's the matter, lass?' exclaimed James Redmayne, staring at her.

'I was only looking at the picture,' she said. 'It's so like—'

'So like what?'

'Like Mr. Walgrave, uncle.' On which, of course, they all turned and stared at the barrister, who was sitting on the edge of the great oak table, looking about him listlessly.

The portrait of Sir John Clevedon represented a man with close-cut dark hair, clustering in short crisp curls about a high and somewhat bald forehead. Eyes of a luminous gray, darkened by the darkness of the lashes, and the marked brows above them. The nose was a short aquiline, with well-cut nostrils; and the nose and eyebrows together gave a somewhat sinister look to a face which would otherwise have been supremely handsome. Nor was the face distinguished by physical beauty only: it was impossible to doubt the power of the intellect of the man to whom it had belonged.

Mr. Walgrave raised his eyes, and looked steadily at the pic-

ture. Yes, there was a likeness, certainly—vague and shadowy—a likeness of expression rather than of feature, although even in feature there was some resemblance. The eyes were the same colour, and had something of the same light in them. The short dark hair grew in the same form upon the thoughtful forehead. As the living man looked up at the picture of the dead one, the faces seemed to grow more alike. One could fancy some subtle spiritual link between the two.

‘Upon my word, I feel vastly flattered by the suggestion,’ said Mr. Walgrave coolly. ‘A man who disputed the palm with that handsome scoundrel Robert Carr is a person one must needs be proud to resemble, if ever so slightly. But I fancy the likeness exists only in your poetic imagination, Miss Redmayne.’

‘Not a bit of it!’ cried uncle James. ‘I’m blest if you ain’t like him!’

‘Then the gentleman must be like my old master, Sir Lucas, into the bargain,’ said Tristram Moles. ‘Sir Lucas was a true Cleveland. My poor old eyes are too dim to see such things very clear; but if the gentleman’s like one, he must be like the other.’

Mr. Wort turned upon his heel rather impatiently.

‘We’d better not waste all our time dawdling here, if we’re going to see the house,’ he said. Upon which they walked on into the great dining-hall, with its open gothic roof, where a couple of hundred people could dine at their ease; through billiard-room and music-room, morning-room and ball-room; and then back through a line of smaller rooms, looking out upon a Dutch garden, to the hall and the grand staircase, up which they went, startling the echoes with the clangour of their footsteps upon the uncarpeted stone.

Upstairs there were state bedchambers, with tall plumed bedsteads, tapestry hangings, and a general aspect of uninhabiteness; and there were other rooms, in which the furniture was of a more modern date; but upon all the stamp of decay was more or less visible. There was no dirt or slovenliness. Mrs. Moles and her handmaiden worked indefatigably to keep things as well as they could be kept; but the water had come in here, and the paper-hanging had fallen down there; and there was in one room a cracked panel, and in another a broken window. Everything that could fade had faded; everything that could rot had rotted; yet the house had been originally so splendid, that it was splendid even in decay.

It happened somehow that Mr. Walgrave and Grace were generally together during this exploration. It happened so; there was no appearance of effort on the part of either to secure such a result. Mr. and Mrs. Redmayne had a good deal to say to the old butler, who was eager for gossip from the outer world of Kingsbury; and these three lingered to talk here and there, while Mr. Wort looked about him, thoughtfully contemplating the progress of decay and

dilapidation. When they had seen all the rooms—the dingy old pictures, the curious old china, the nicknacks and pretty trifles which many a vanished hand had been wont to touch tenderly in a time long gone—Grace and her companion came to a standstill in the room over the chief entrance, the room with that great oriel window, which was one of the most striking features in the front of the house. It was the prettiest, brightest chamber upon this upper floor—a sitting-room, furnished almost entirely with Indian furniture—curiously carved ebony chairs, sandal-wood cabinets, card-racks and caskets in ivory and silver, great jars filled with dried rose-leaves and spices, still faintly odorous.

‘Isn’t it a darling room?’ cried Grace rapturously, standing in the window with clasped hands, and her eyes wandering over the wide landscape, glorious in its summer splendour. ‘How delicious it must be to live with such a prospect as that always before one’s eyes! At Brierwood we are down in a hollow, and never see anything but our own garden. This was Lady Clevedon’s room; not the last Lady Clevedon—she never came here, poor soul—but Sir Lucas’s mother. She was the daughter of an Indian general, who sent her all this furniture. There’s a miniature of Sir Lucas when he was a little boy over the mantelpiece,’ she continued, going across the room to look at it. ‘What a funny little nankeen jacket, and what an enormous collar! Yes, there is certainly a likeness.’

‘To whom?’

‘To you. Don’t you remember what Mr. Moles said? If you were like Sir John Clevedon, you must be like Sir Lucas. And there is a likeness—about the eyes and the expression, I think.’

‘Curious,’ said Mr. Walgrave indifferently. ‘I suppose I ought to feel gratified by the discovery, these Clevedons appear to be such great people.’

‘They are a very old family, Mr. Wort says, and were distinguished in the days of the Plantagenets. It was a pity Sir Lucas spent all his money, wasn’t it?’

‘I daresay his son thinks so,’ replied Mr. Walgrave coolly.

‘However, according to Wort’s account, the estate will clear itself in a year or two, and Francis Clevedon may come and take up his abode here. Rather a lucky fellow, to find himself master of such a place as this at thirty years of age. A man who owns such a house need take no trouble to distinguish himself. His estate is his distinction.’

‘Would you like to be the owner of it?’ Grace asked, smiling at his earnestness.

‘Very much. I would give a great deal to be independent of the world, Grace—not to be obliged to tread a road marked out for me ever so long ago; not to be bent body and soul upon reaching one particular point. I never knew how hard it was to have my own fox-

tune to make—not to be a free agent, in fact—until—until these last few days.’

The girl looked at him wonderingly, her face very pale.

‘Why in these last few days?’ she asked.

‘Because within that time I have made a fatal discovery, Grace.’

‘What discovery?’

‘That I love you.’

She looked at him for a moment, half incredulously, and then burst into tears.

He put his arm round her, clasped her to his breast, looking down upon her fondly, but with none of the triumph of a happy lover.

‘My dearest, my sweetest, don’t cry. I am not worth one of those tears. The secret is out, darling. I never meant to tell you. I hold you in my arms for a moment, for the first and last time. I don’t even kiss you, you see. I love you with all my heart and soul, Grace Redmayne, and—I am engaged to marry another woman. I tell you both facts in a breath. All my future depends on the marriage; and I am not unworldly enough to say, Let my future go.’

Grace disengaged herself gently from his encircling arms, her whole face beaming. He loved her. After that the deluge. What did it matter to her, just in that one triumphant moment, that he was pledged to marry another woman and break her heart? To know that he loved her was in itself so sweet, there was no room in her mind for a sorrowful thought.

‘You don’t wish me to marry a farmer?’ she said, smiling at him.

‘God forbid that you should, my darling. I should like you to stand for ever apart from common clay, a “bright particular star.” I must go my way, and live my life; that is written amongst the immutabilities. But it would be some consolation for me to think of Grace Redmayne as something above the vulgar world in which I lived.’

Consolation for him! He did not even think of whether *she* might or might not have need of consolation. And yet he knew that she loved him; had suspected as much for some little time, indeed. He thought that he had acted in a remarkably honourable manner in telling her the true state of the case with such perfect frankness. There were very few men in his position would have done as much, he told himself.

The door had been half open all this time, and the approaching footsteps and voices of the rest of the party now made themselves audible. Grace brushed away the traces of her tears, and went to the window to gain a little time before she faced her relations. Mr. Walgrave followed her, and opened one of the casements, and made some remark about the landscape to cover her confusion.

'Well, now we've seen all the house, I suppose it's pretty nigh time to think of a bit of grub. Where are we going to have our dinners, Mr. Walgrave?' asked James Redmayne. 'In the gardens, or in the park?'

'In neither, Mr. Redmayne,' answered the barrister. 'We are going to imagine ourselves genuine Clevedons, and dine in the great hall.'

'Eh! Well, that is a rum start. I thought you'd have been for spreading the table-cloth on the grass in a rural way; but I don't suppose Mr. Moles here will have any objection.'

'Not in the least, Mr. Redmayne. You can make as free as you please in the dining-hall; any one as Mr. Wort brings is kindly welcome; and me and my wife can get you anything you may want.'

'We've brought everything,' said aunt Hannah proudly. 'I packed the baskets with my own hands.'

'Then me and my wife can wait upon you, Mrs. Redmayne, all the same,' replied the butler.

They all went downstairs: aunt Hannah and Mr. Moles leading the way, discoursing confidentially about the baskets; Mr. Wort and Mr. Redmayne following, talking agriculture; Grace and the barrister last of all.

'Let us have one happy day together, Grace,' he said, as they went slowly down the grand staircase. 'Let us forget there is any such thing as the future, and be utterly happy for to-day.'

'I cannot help being happy when I am with you,' she answered softly, too innocent to consider the peril of owning her love so frankly.

CHAPTER VII.

'IF IT COULD ALWAYS BE TO-DAY!'

THERE was a small oval table at the end of the dining-hall—small, that is to say, in comparison with the long banqueting tables on each side of the hall, but capable of accommodating twelve or fourteen people, a table at which the Prince Regent had dined with a chosen few when all the county was assembled to do him honour—and it was this board which Mr. Walgrave insisted upon spreading with the contents of Mrs. Redmayne's baskets. He helped to lay the cloth himself, handing Grace the glasses and knives and forks as dextrously as if he had been a professional waiter accustomed to earn his three half-crowns nightly.

'We are used to picnicking, in chambers,' he said. 'I always help to lay the cloth when I have fellows to breakfast or dine with me. What a banquet you have brought, Mrs. Redmayne! I suggested a joint and a salad, and you have prepared an aldermanic

feast—pigeon-pie, corned beef, chicken in savory jelly, and—O, pray inform me, what is this sloppy compound in a stone jar? Are we to return to the days of our infancy, and eat curds-and-whey?’

‘That’s a junket, Mr. Walgrave,’ replied aunt Hannah, with rather an offended air. ‘It wasn’t an easy thing to bring, I can tell you; but I think it has come all right. My mother was a West-countrywoman, and taught me to make junkets. They’re reckoned a dainty by most people.’

‘Rely upon it, I shall not be backward in my appreciation of the junket, Mrs. Redmayne. Now, Grace, you are to sit at the bottom of the table and be Lady Clevedon, and I shall take my place at the top as Sir Hubert. Mr. Wort, you will take the right of her ladyship; Mrs. Redmayne, I must have you by my side; and the rest anywhere.’

The two young men had come in from their ramble by this time, and the whole party, except one, fell to with hearty appetite, and made havoc of the pigeon-pie and boiled beef, savory jelly and other kickshaws, in the way of salad, cucumber, &c.; while Mr. Moles the butler waited upon them with as stately an air as if he had been presiding at the head of an army of serving-men at one of the princely banquets of days gone by. He permitted himself a quiet smile once or twice at some facetious remark of Mr. Walgrave’s, but was for the most part the very genius of gravity, pouring out the Brierwood cider, and the sherry contributed by Mr. Walgrave, with as much dignity as if the liquors had been cabinet hocks or madeiras of priceless worth.

It was a merry meal. The barrister seemed as light-hearted as if his fame and fortune were made, and he had nothing more to do in life than to enjoy himself. Not always does Apollo strain his bow, and to-day the string hung loose, and Apollo abandoned himself heart and soul to happy idleness. He talked all through the meal, rattling on in very exuberance of spirits, while the two lads, who had some dim sense of humour, laughed vociferously ever and anon in the intervals of their serious labour; and Grace, in her post of honour at the bottom of the table, smiled and sparkled like a fountain in the sunshine. She had no need to say anything. It was enough for her to look so joyous and beautiful. Perhaps any blackbird in the Clevedon woods might have eaten as much as Miss Redmayne consumed that day; but it is only when every spiritual joy has vanished from a human soul that the pleasures of the table come to be pleasures, and the food which Grace ate that day was not grown on earthly soil. She was in fairyland, and had about as much consciousness of the common things of this world as Titania when she caressed her loutish lover.

They were nearly two hours in the dining-hall, two hours which appeared to Grace just one brief half hour of perfect happiness, a

vague dreamy joy which almost confused her senses; and then they went out into the gardens.

At Clevedon the gardens covered some eight acres, and were the chief glory of the place. Sorely neglected now, a very wilderness of rose and syringa, honeysuckle and clematis, moss-grown paths, arched alleys, where the foliage grew in tangled masses, passion-flower and virginia creeper choking each other in their wild luxuriance; here a fallen statue, there an empty marble basin, which had once been a fountain; at one end of an alley a wide pond half hidden by water-lilies; at another, a broad stretch of bowling-green, bounded by a dense holly-hedge. The grass was cut now and then, and that one Italian flower-garden which had belonged to Lady Clevedon was kept in tolerable order, and that was all. The rest was chaos.

'I think if I were a millionaire, I would have at least one garden kept just in this condition,' said Mr. Walgrave, as they wandered among the straggling rose-bushes, caught every now and then by some trailing branch that lay across their path; 'a garden in which the flowers should grow just as they liked, should degenerate and become mere weeds again if they pleased. I always fancy that bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream some wild neglected place like this. There are lovelinesses of form and colour in these rank masses of foliage which no gardener's art could ever produce.'

Of course, Grace agreed with him. She thought every word that fell from his lips a pearl of wisdom.

They found a delightful green arbour, spacious and cool, and tolerably free from spiders, where uncle James and Mr. Wort could smoke their after-dinner pipes and sip the milk-punch; in which pleasant retreat they invited Mr. Moles the butler to join them for a friendly half hour. It was not to be supposed, however, that Mr. Walgrave would hob and nob with a butler; and Mrs. Redmayne was in no manner surprised when, after just tasting the punch, he strolled away with Grace and her cousins. The cousins soon fled from the humdrum beauty of the gardens, and went back to the woods, where there were wild creatures to chase and trees to climb; so Grace and Mr. Walgrave had the gardens all to themselves.

Perhaps in all Grace Redmayne's brief life that was the happiest day—a day of perfect unalloyed delight. No matter that her lover had only declared his love in one breath, to tell her in the next that there was an insurmountable barrier between them. The time must come by and by when the thought of that would be despair; but it was not so yet. He loved her. In that one sentence was concentrated all she could imagine of earthly bliss. She had thought of him as something so far away—she had given him all her heart in childish ignorance of the cost. Life had been very sweet to her of late merely because he was near her. Even while

she supposed him indifferent, only courteous with a stranger's courtesy to a woman of lower rank than his own, to see his face and to hear his voice had been enough. What was it, then, to know that he loved her—that this one supreme, almost incredible hazard had befallen her? Of all the women who had worshipped him—and a girl of Grace's sentimental temper is apt to suppose that every woman who has ever beheld him must needs adore her idol—he had chosen her. Ineffable condescension! The poor little foolish heart fluttered still with the emotion of that overpowering moment when he uttered those sublime words, 'Grace, I love you.'

As for Mr. Walgrave himself, he too found that dreamy afternoon wandering in neglected fruit and flower gardens—now pausing to pluck a rose, now loitering to gather a little heap of white raspberries on a broad green fig-leaf—not by any means an unenjoyable business. There was a faint flavour of worry and vexation of spirit mingled in the cup of joy. Even among the roses, looking down at Grace Redmayne's sweet girlish face, the shadow of future trouble fell darkly across his path. It was all very well to be so happy for to-day; but to-morrow was very near—and how could he break with a girl who loved him like this? It would be an awful wrench for him, let it come when it might; and yet a week ago he had made very light of this rustic flirtation, and had told himself that he was the last man in the world to come to grief in such a manner. Pretty faces were not new to him. He had lived amongst attractive women—had been courted and petted by them ever since his professional prospects had begun to bud with promise of rich blossom in days to come.

'I told her the truth, at any rate,' he said to himself, as he watched Grace's ardent face, on which the light of happiness shone supernal. 'I'm very glad of that. What a dear little confiding soul she is, with not a thought of the future—with not one selfish calculation in her mind—happy only to be loved! I wish I had held my tongue. I suppose I ought to leave Brierwood to-morrow. It's like sporting on the edge of a precipice. And yet—'

And yet he meant to stay, and did stay.

The afternoon lasted three hours. In the arbour, pipes, and gossip, and punch, and soothing slumbers beguiled the elders into unconsciousness of the flight of time. It was only when a perceptible fading in the glory of the day, a mellow light, a cooler air, a gentle whispering of summer winds among the trees, warned them that evening had come unawares, that Mrs. Redmayne suddenly bestirred herself to see about tea. They must drink tea, of course, before they bent their way homewards. The day's festivities would be incomplete without a tea-drinking.

Happily there was not much for aunt Hannah to do, or the light would have scarcely lasted them. The lads had selected an

eligible spot under a great Spanish chestnut in the woods, had collected firing, and lighted the fire and boiled the kettle. Everything was ready. 'Mother' was only wanted to make and dispense the tea.

They followed the lads gaily through those delicious woods, where birds, which ought to have been nightingales if they were not, were warbling and jugjugging divinely; followed to a fairy-like amphitheatre of greensward, shut in by tall limes and Spanish chestnuts, under the biggest of which the lads had spread their rustic tea-table, while the wood-fire smoked and smouldered a little way off.

Grace clapped her hands with delight.

'O, if we could always live here,' she cried, 'how sweet it would be!'

If we could always live here—if it could always be to-day, she thought; and then to her childish fancy it seemed that with the fading of that blissful day the end of all her happiness must come. For the first time she began to realise the actual state of the case; for the first time she felt the shadow of coming trouble—parting—tears—death; for could it be less than death to lose him?

They sat side by side under the chestnut. Aunt Hannah glanced at them sharply, but could see nothing suspicious in the manner of either. It was not strange that Mr. Walgrave should be polite to her niece, who really was a pretty girl, and fifteen years his junior. There could hardly be any danger.

It was a pleasant, innocent, rustic tea-drinking—the two young men and their father consuming innumerable cups of tea, and eating bread-and-butter with an air of having fasted for the last twenty-four hours. That chasing of tender young beastlings of the squirrel tribe had given the lads an alarming appetite. There were shrimps in abundance—pretty pink young things, which looked as if one might have strung them into coral necklaces—shrimps and plum-cake. The young Redmaynes were ready for anything. They were noisy too in their exuberance, and were altogether so boisterous in their mirth, that Hubert Walgrave and his companion had plenty of time for low sweet converse, unheard and unobserved. Grace brightened again as her lover talked to her, and again forgot that life was not bounded by to-day—forgot everything except that she was with him.

The twilight was darkening into night when the crockeryware was all packed and the party ready. Mr. Walgrave and Grace had strolled a little way in advance while the packing was in progress—hardly out of sight, not at all out of hearing. Aunt Hannah could catch a glimpse of her niece's light muslin dress glimmering between the trees every now and then—could hear her happy laugh. They were just gathering themselves together to follow, when a piercing scream rang through the wood.

'Lord have mercy upon us, what's that?' cried Mrs. James. 'Twas Grace's voice, surely. Run and see, Charley.'

Both young men sped off, and one of them ran against Mr. Walgrave, who came towards them with Grace in his arms, her head lying helplessly on his shoulder, her face ghastly white.

'She has fainted,' he said. 'I never saw any one so frightened. We sat down upon a felled tree yonder for a minute, waiting for you, and a viper—I think it must have been—shot out of the grass between us and ran across her dress. It was the surprise, I suppose, that overcame her.'

He laid her gently down upon the grass with her head upon her aunt's lap. They all looked more frightened than the occasion seemed to warrant.

'It's only a faint,' Mr. Walgrave said reassuringly. 'Lay her flat upon the grass, and she'll come round quickly enough. Run for some water, Charley, there's a good fellow.'

He was kneeling by the girl's side, with one little cold hand in his. Her face was still deadly pale—almost livid; and aunt Hannah was looking at it with an anxious countenance.

'It isn't as if it was any one else,' she said, chafing the girl's disengaged hand. 'Fainting is no great matter for most folks; but it isn't easy to bring her round. She went off just like this the day her father went away, and gave us all a fine turn. I thought she was gone. It's her heart, you see.'

'Her heart!' cried Mr. Walgrave aghast. 'What's the matter with her heart?'

He laid his hand upon the girl's breast with an alarmed look.

'I'm afraid there's something wrong. Her mother died of heart-complaint, you know—went indoors one summer evening to fetch her needlework, and dropped down dead at the foot of the stairs. The heart had stopped beating all in a moment, the doctor said; and the same doctor has told me that Grace isn't a long-lived woman—she's too much like her mother.'

There was a faint fluttering under his hand. Thank God for that! The heart that loved him so fondly, so foolishly, had not ceased to beat. But Mr. Walgrave had experienced a smart shock notwithstanding; and when Grace opened her eyes presently, and looked up at him, his face was almost as pale as her own.

She drew a long shuddering breath, drank a few spoonfuls of water, and declared herself quite well, and then rose with tremulous limbs, and looked round her, smiling faintly.

'I'm afraid I've given you all a great deal of trouble,' she said. 'It was very foolish of me; but the sight of that horrid creature frightened me so. It didn't sting—any one, did it?' she asked nervously, looking at Hubert Walgrave.

'No, Grace; there has been no harm done,' he answered, with

a cheering smile, though his face was still white. 'The beast was only a little innocent worm. I could not have believed you would behave so like a fine lady.'

'It was a viper,' cried Grace. 'Vipers have stung people to death in this country. And he darted out just between us, as if—as if—'

She faltered, and stopped; but Hubert Walgrave knew very well what she would have said: 'as if he came to part us.'

'Take my arm, Miss Redmayne,' he said, in his easiest way; 'and don't alarm yourself about vipers. I hold them very harmless, unless they take the biped form. Do you feel equal to walking home at once? or would you like to rest a little?'

'I am not at all tired. I am quite ready to go.'

And so they went arm-in-arm through the narrow pathways, brushing against the bearded barley and the feathery oats and the fast-ripening wheat, all silvered by the summer moonbeams, and anon emerging upon some smooth stretch of meadow, where the new-grown grass was sweet, and where a clump of trees made an island of shadow here and there. They went home together, only a few yards in advance of the Brierwood party, and yet alone; and Grace forgot the viper.

CHAPTER VIII.

'RECAL HER TEARS, TO THEE AT PARTING GIVEN.'

It was some time, however, before Mr. Walgrave forgot what he had heard in the wood about Grace's mother—that dark hint of heart-disease. He took occasion to question Mrs. James next day upon the subject, and made himself fully acquainted with the details of Mrs. Richard Redmayne's death, and what the doctor had said about Grace. He had made no examination, it appeared; no stethoscope had ever sounded the innocent young heart; but he had remarked to Mrs. James once confidentially, that there was something about her niece's appearance he hardly liked, and that it would not surprise him if her constitution should develop the same tendency that had been fatal to her mother. This had been said while Richard Redmayne was in England; and his sister-in-law had not cared to alarm either him or her niece by any hint of what the doctor had said.

'If it was heart-disease, you see,' said Mrs. James, 'there'd be no cure for it; and if it wasn't, it would have been cruel to upset poor Rick in the midst of his troubles, which was coming pretty fast upon him just then; so I thought the wisest thing I could do was to hold my tongue.'

'Quite right, Mrs. Redmayne. No doubt the doctor wanted a job. Your medical men can have very little to do in this pure atmo-

sphere. A chronic case, rich farmer's only child, and so on. Heart-disease! No; I don't for a moment believe that your niece Grace has anything amiss with her heart. At her age the very idea seems preposterous.'

'Well, it do, Mr. Walgry—don't it? But her mother was only seven-and-twenty when she died. They're not a long-lived family, any of the Norbitts; and Grace's mother was a Norbitt.'

Mr. Walgrave persisted in making light of the matter. He would not permit himself to think that anything so bright and sweet as Grace Redmayne was doomed to vanish suddenly and untimely from this earth. He pooh-poohed the country surgeon's opinion, and very speedily contrived to get rid of any uneasiness which the subject might have caused him.

An event occurred to divert his attention in some manner a few days after the picnic. He had more than half made up his mind to leave Brierwood, and go abroad somewhere for the rest of the long vacation. He could not quite shut his eyes to the peril of remaining where he was. He had recovered his strength—was almost as well as ever he had been, in fact. In every way it would be best and wisest for him to go.

He began to pack his portmanteau one night, took out his *Bradshaw*, and made a profound study of the continental routes. Why should he not spend his autumn abroad? There was Spain, for instance. He had an intense desire to see Spain, from the Escorial to the Alhambra. Yet to-night, somehow, the vision of dark-eyed damsels and bull-fights had scarcely any charm for his imagination. He flung the railway-guide into a distant corner with an impatient sigh.

'Why should I run away from her when I love her so dearly?' he said to himself. 'Cannot a man live two lives—give his outward seeming and all the labour of his brain to the world, and keep his heart in some safe shelter, hidden away from the crowd? Other men have done it; why should not I? Is there a man upon earth who would throw away such a treasure as that girl?'

And then Mr. Walgrave fell into a profound meditation, and went to bed at last in the gray morning to spend three mortal hours tossing to and fro, tormented by the most perplexing thoughts that had ever wearied his brain. He was trying to reconcile things that were irreconcilable. His future life had been planned long ago—judiciously, he believed. He did not mean that anything should alter those plans. Whatever new element might arise must be made subservient to those. He was not a man to turn aside from the path which he had cut for himself—a high-road to fame and fortune—for any consideration whatever. He meant to renounce nothing.

But—but if he could hold fast by all he valued so highly, and

yet win that other prize—that sweeter, nearer delight? Fame and fortune must come in the future—he would do nothing to forfeit the certainty of those. But why should he not snatch this other joy in the present, and let the future, so far as it concerned Grace Redmayne, take care of itself? If that croaking country surgeon's opinion were indeed correct, and the poor child were not destined to live long, so much the easier would it be to provide for the happiness and security of her future. There was no sacrifice, short of that entire sacrifice of his own prospects, which he would not make for her. And so his thoughts rambled on, shaping first one scheme and then another, only to abandon them. And when he got up in the morning, he said to himself resolutely:

‘I will make it the business of my life to forget her. A man who takes such a step as that always wrecks himself. Sooner or later his folly comes home to him. I have gone through life without a single error of that kind. It would be madness to begin now.’

He went downstairs, and sauntered out into the garden. It was still early. All the pleasant bustle of farmhouse life was at its height in dairy and outhouses and kitchen. Grace, with a basket on her arm and a pair of scissors in her hand, was clipping and trimming the roses near the house, fair as Tennyson's famous gardener's daughter when first her lover saw her in the porch.

The vivid blush, lighting up the fair pale face, the sudden look of pleased surprise—how sweet they were!

‘And I am going to surrender all this,’ Mr. Walgrave thought with a sharp pang. He had quite made up his mind to go away, by this time; but he could not make up his mind to tell her his intention. Better to put off that until the very last moment, and then with one desperate wrench tear himself away.

They strolled round the garden, Grace clipping the roses as she went, not quite so neatly as she would have clipped them without that companionship. The hands fluttered a little among the leaves as they did their work. He was talking to her; those unfathomable gray eyes were watching her. He had never spoken of his love since that day at Clevedon; had said scarcely a word which her uncle and aunt might not have heard; but he had lost no opportunity of being with her; and she had been almost completely happy. She did not forget what he had told her. He was engaged to marry another woman. He would go away by and by, and her life would be desolate; but she only looked forward to this desolation with a vague terror. She could not be unhappy while he was near her.

They wasted about an hour in the garden. Grace had breakfasted half an hour ago, early as it was. Mr. Walgrave's breakfast was waiting for him in the cool airy parlour. He went slowly back to the house at last, still with Grace by his side. Aunt Hannah was up to her eyes in dairy-work at this time of the day. There was no

one to observe them. They were talking of the books Grace had been reading lately—books which opened a new world to her—and her brightness and intelligence delighted her lover.

‘If all Miss Toulmin’s pupils are anything like you, Grace, I shall certainly make a point of sending my daughters to her some day,’ he said lightly.

She looked at him for a moment, and then grew very pale. His daughters! He was talking of a time when he should be married to that other woman—when she would have passed out of his life altogether. That careless speech of his had brought the fact sharply home to her. He was nothing, never could be anything, to her.

‘You will have forgotten my existence by the time your daughters are old enough to go to school,’ she said.

‘Forgotten you, Grace? Never! Fate rules our lives, but not our hearts. I shall never forget you, Grace. I behaved very badly the other day, when I told you the impression you had made upon me. It was an offence against you—and some one else. But I think that you, at least, have forgiven me.’

He spoke as lightly as he could, like a man of the world, but was very far from feeling lightly. Grace was silent. That common-sense tone of apology cut her to the quick. She scarcely knew what she had hoped or dreamed within the last few days; but they had been so happy together, that the image of her unknown rival, the woman he was destined to marry, had seemed very vague and unreal.

‘I have nothing to forgive,’ she said coldly. ‘It is for—the—the other person to be angry.’

‘The other person would be very angry, no doubt, if I were to make a full confession of my sins; but I don’t mean to do so, believe me. The other person will go down to her grave in ignorance of the truth. But I want to be assured of your forgiveness, Grace. Just raise those sweet eyes of yours, and say, “I forgive you for having loved me too well.”’

Grace smiled—a bitter smile.

‘So well, that you—that you will go away and marry some one else,’ she said, the practical phase of the situation coming home to her with that first pang of jealousy.

‘My dearest girl,’ cried Mr. Walgrave, who had by no means desired the conversation to take this turn, ‘there are very few men in this world who can choose their own road in life. Mine was chosen for me long ago. I am not my own master; if I were—’

‘If you were,’ repeated Grace, with a sudden desperate courage, that was as much a surprise to herself as it was to him—‘if you were, would you marry a bankrupt farmer’s daughter?’

‘If I were the master of Clevedon, Grace—if I had five thousand a year—yes. But I have my own way to make in the world, and

I am weak enough to value success. I am engaged to marry a woman whose fortune will help me to win a position, and to maintain it. That is as much as to say, I am going to sell myself, isn't it ?

'It sounds rather like that.'

'Men do it every day, Grace—quite as often as women; and the thing answers fairly enough in ten cases out of twenty. I dare say I shall make a very tolerable average kind of husband. I shall not spend all my wife's money, and I shall go to dinner-parties with her. I think I can give her almost as much heart as she will give me; and yet, Grace, I never loved but one woman upon this earth, and her name is Grace Redmayne.'

The girl was silent. He was cruel, he was base; and yet it was still sweet to her to be told that he loved her. With all her heart and soul she believed him.

'I never meant that our talk should take this turn,' Hubert Walgrave went on, after a rather lengthened pause. 'I meant only to bid you good-bye, and to go away without one dangerous word.'

She looked up at him with sudden terror in her face.

'You are going away!' she exclaimed. 'Soon?'

'Very soon; to-day, in fact, if possible. What should I do here? The wrench must come, Grace. The sooner the better.'

She tried to answer him, but her lips only trembled, and then began to cry. All the eloquence that ever poured from the lips of woman exalted by passion would not have touched him so keenly as that mute look—those childish tears. It was little more than a child's unreasoning love that she gave him perhaps, but it was so pure and perfect of its kind!

They had turned away from the house, instinctively avoiding it as their conversation grew more tender, and were walking slowly towards the orchard, quite out of human ken. Mr. Walgrave drew his arm around the girl's waist, comforting her—drew her close to him, until the graceful head sank on his shoulder. Never had so fair a head rested there before. He bent down and kissed the pure young brow.

This was the manner in which he began to forget her.

'My dearest, my sweetest!' he said pleadingly, 'your tears go to my heart of hearts. I am so anxious to do what is wise, what is right. Upon my soul, Grace, I believe that I could bring myself to forego all question of worldly advantage—he did fancy for the moment that this was so—'if—if my honour were not involved in this marriage which I speak of. But it is, darling; it is quite too late for me to recede from my engagement. I should be the vilest of defaulters if I did. Let us be reasonable, then, my sweet one. I wish to do what is best for you, for both of us. Don't you think that it would be wisest for me to go away?'

'I don't know whether it would be wise or foolish,' she sobbed, with her head still upon his shoulder; 'but I think my heart will break if you go.'

He drew her a little closer to him. Great heavens, why had he not five thousand a year, and the right to marry this village maiden? It seemed to him a very hard thing that he was not able to win this wayside flower, and yet keep all the other advantages he valued so highly.

'But remember, dearest,' he said, trying his uttermost to be worldly and practical, 'it is at best only a question of a week or so, more or less. It is very sweet to me to be with you. I doubt if I ever felt what real happiness was before I knew you; but I cannot linger in this happy valley for ever. The time of parting *must* come at last, and will seem the harder for every hour we spend together. Would it not be wiser to part at once? Say yes, Grace, for both our sakes.'

'I can't. I can't be glad for you to go away. If you are really happy here, why should you be so anxious to go? I know that I can never be any more to you than I am now—that you must go away at last—to that—other person—'

'And yet you would rather have me stay?'

'Yes, yes!'

'Very well, then, I stay; but it is at your request, remember, Grace; and when the time *does* come for our parting, you will be reasonable. We will bury our love in a deep, deep grave, and you will forget that you ever knew me.'

'We will bury our love,' the girl answered softly.

After this, Mr. Walgrave went slowly in to breakfast, with very little appetite, and with a vague sense of having made a fool of himself, after all. All those tossings to and fro—those schemes made and unmade—that final resolve on the side of prudence—had come to nothing. He was going to remain.

'Heaven help any man of five-and-thirty who has the ill-luck to win the heart of a girl of nineteen!' he said to himself. 'Sweet Grace Redmayne, what a child she is!'

Grace went into the parlour with her basket only a quarter full of withered roses—there were plenty of faded flowers left to perish on the trees. The door of the passage that led to the kitchen was open, and she could hear a confusion of tongues, and her aunt's voice protesting about the awkwardness of something.

'It couldn't have fell out awkwarder,' cried Mrs. James; 'a good two months before we'd any right to expect it; and all my arrangements made, even down to the weekly washing. I'm sure I'd thought of everything, and planned everything, and nothing could have been straighter than it all would have been, if the baby *had* come to its time.'

Grace listened wonderingly, but had no occasion to wonder long. Mrs. James bounced into the parlour. 'What *do* you think, Grace? Priscilla Sprouter's baby was born last night.'

Priscilla was the married daughter, united to a prosperous young grocer in the small town of Chickfield, Sussex, about forty miles from Brierwood. This unarithmetical infant, which had arrived before it was due, was Mrs. James Redmayne's second grandchild; and Mrs. James had solemnly pledged herself to pay a fortnight's visit to Chickfield whenever the event should take place, in order to attend to the general welfare of her daughter's person and household. The usual nurse would be engaged, of course; but Mrs. James was a power paramount over that hireling.

The interesting event, however, was to have occurred in October, and all Mrs. James's arrangements were made accordingly: a reliable matron engaged to take the helm at Brierwood during her absence; a fortnight's suspension of those more solemn duties of brewing and preserving, which could not be performed without being duly provided for; and behold, here was a special messenger, mounted on a sturdy unkempt pony in the butcher interest, come with a letter announcing the untimely advent of a fine boy.

'Fine, indeed!' cried aunt Hannah contemptuously. 'And please will I come at once; for father—that's William Sprouter—is so uneasy?'

'I suppose you must go, aunt,' said Grace dubiously.

'You suppose I must, do you? And a sieve and a half of Orleans plums in the back kitchen. Who do you suppose is to look after them?'

'Couldn't Mrs. Bush make the jam, aunt, if you must go?'

'Of course Mrs. Bush could. Every one that can put a saucepan on the fire will tell you they can make jam; and nice slop it will be—a couple of inches deep in blue mould before it's been made a month. No, Grace, I am not the woman to treat your father's property like that. I shall make the jam, if I drop; and I suppose I must start off to Chickfield as soon as it's made. And I should like to know who's to see after Mr. Walgry's dinners when I'm gone.'

'Couldn't I manage that, aunt Hannah? I don't think Mr. Walgrave is very particular about his dinners.'

'Not particular; no, of course not: as long as everything is done to a turn, a man seems easy enough to please; but just try him with a shoulder of lamb half raw, or a slice of salmon boiled to a mash, and then see what he'll say. However, I must go to Priscilla for a few days, at any rate, and things must take their chance here. I've sent Jack across to tell Mrs. Bush she must come directly; and I do hope, Grace, you'll show a little steadiness for

once in a way, and see that your father's goods ain't wasted. If Mr. Walgrave wasn't a very quiet kind of gentleman, I shouldn't care about leaving you; but he isn't like the common run of single men—there's no nonsense about *him*.'

Grace blushed fiery red, and had to turn suddenly to the window to hide her face. Mrs. James was too busy to perceive her confusion, skirmishing about the room, peering into a great roomy store-cupboard in a corner by the fireplace, filling the tea-caddy and the sugar-canister, calculating how much colonial produce ought to be consumed during her absence.

'You'll give Mrs. Bush a quarter of a pound of tea and half a pound of sugar for the week, remember, Grace—not a grain more. And don't be letting them have butcher's meat in the kitchen more than twice a week. If they can't eat good wholesome bacon, they must go without. Sarah knows the kind of dinners I get for Mr. Walgry; and Mrs. Bush is to cook for him. But be sure you see to everything with your own eyes, and give your orders to the butcher with your own lips. The broad-beans are to be eaten, mind, without any fuss about likes or dislikes: your uncle didn't sow them for the crows. And don't be giving all the damsons to Jack and Charley in puddings. I shall want to make damson cheese when I come back; and if they want to make themselves ill in their insides, there's plenty of windfalls that's good enough for *that*. And I should like to see those linen pillow-cases darned neatly when I come home. Miss Toulmin had a deal better have learnt you to mend house-linen than to *parley-vous Français*. I'm sure anything I give you to darn hangs about till I'm sick of the sight of it.'

'I'll do the best I can, aunt,' said Grace meekly. 'Shall you be away long, do you think?'

'How can I tell, child? If Priscilla and the baby go on well, I sha'n't stop more than a week at the outside. But she's a delicate young woman, and there's no knowing what turn things may take. I sha'n't stop longer than I can help, you may take my word for that. And now I'm going into the best parlour to tell Mr. Walgry.'

Grace sat down by the open window, fluttered strangely by this small domestic business. Her aunt would be away—the scrutiny of those sharp eyes removed from her; a week of almost perfect freedom before her—she could not help thinking that in her aunt's absence she would see more of the man she loved. She knew that he had been obliged to diplomatise a good deal in order to spend half an hour with her, now and then, without creating suspicion. It would be different now. For one happy week they might meet without restraint. And then—and then the end of all things would come, and they must part. That bitter parting must come sooner or later; he had told her so in sober seriousness. She tried very

hard to realise the fact, but could not. She was too much a child; and a week seemed almost an eternity of happiness.

'Will he be glad?' she said to herself. 'O, I wonder if he will be glad.' If she could have looked into her lover's heart after he heard Mrs. Redmayne's announcement, she would have discovered that he was not glad.

'I wish I had gone away this morning, without any leave-taking,' he said to himself; 'to go now, when she has asked me to stay, would seem sheer brutality. And to stay, now that the dragon is going away, and we can be together all day long, is only heaping up misery for the future. I did not believe myself capable of being made unhappy by any woman; but it will be a hard struggle to forget this farmer's daughter. I wish I had never seen her. I wish I had never taken it into my head to come here. Pshaw! am I the kind of man to make a trouble out of any such sentimental absurdity as this? Why shouldn't I enjoy a week's innocent flirtation with a pretty girl, and then go back to my own world and forget her?'

And with this laudable intention Mr. Walgrave strolled out into the garden again, in the hope of meeting Grace.

He was disappointed, however, this time. Mrs. James was up to her eyes in preserving, and kept Grace in the kitchen with her, listening to solemn counsel upon all the details of domestic management. It was rather a hard thing to have to stop in the hot kitchen all through that lovely summer day, wiping out jam-pots, cutting and writing labels, and making herself useful in such small ways; but Grace bore the infliction very meekly. To-morrow there would be perfect liberty.

Mr. Walgrave prowled round the garden two or three times, then stretched himself at full length in the orchard, and slumbered for a little in the drowsy August noontide—a slumber in which his dreams were not pleasant—awoke unrefreshed, went back to the house and reconnoitred, caught a glimpse of Grace in the kitchen through a latticed window half buried in ivy, lost his temper, and took up his fishing-rod and wandered out in search of an elderly and experienced pike he had been waging war with for the last six weeks; a wary brute, who thought no more of swallowing a hook than if it had been a sugar-plum, and had acquired, by long usage, a depraved appetite for fishing-tackle.

CHAPTER IX.

'Æ FOND KISS, AND THEN WE SEVER.'

It was late in the afternoon when Hubert Walgrave came back to the farm, and there was a holy calm in the atmosphere of the old house which told him somehow that Mrs. Redmayne had departed. Your household Martha is the most estimable of women, but is apt to make a good deal of *superfluous* clatter in her trouble about many

things. There was an air of perfect peacefulness in the house to-day, which was new and welcome to the lodger. His dinner was served without the usual bustle—not quite so well cooked, perhaps, as when Mrs. James's own hand basted the joint, or made the gravies and seasonings; but he was not a man to whom a well-cooked dinner is the supreme good of life. He liked the repose and tranquillity which Mrs. James had left behind her; liked to think that when he strolled into the garden presently he would find Grace free to give him her society.

He found her sitting at her work—those inexorable pillow-cases—quite alone under the cedar. James Redmayne was by no means a man of dissipated habits; but liberty is very sweet to those who taste it rarely; and he had snatched the opportunity of walking over to Kingsbury, to discuss the ruling topics of the day with the small politicians of the place in the comfortable parlour of the Moon and Seven Stars. Harvest was near, and every man had a good deal to say about his crops. The burrs were beginning to show on the bine. What with politics and agriculture, Mr. Redmayne was in for a long evening. As to Jack and Charley, they never stayed anywhere except for meals. Their normal state was locomotion.

So Grace sat quite alone under the cedar; and all that evening the lovers roamed in the garden and loitered in the orchard, and there was no one to interfere with their happiness. O, halcyon time! O, summer-tide of joy, shadowed by no thought of to-morrow! Grace abandoned herself to her happiness as simply as a child at the beginning of a holiday. He was with her—he had granted her prayer, and stayed. Never had she dreamed that life could hold so much joy. And yet it was only the old story: passionate protestations of unchanging affection—a love which was vast enough for anything except self-sacrifice—a strange mixture of sentiment and worldly wisdom—a good deal of melancholy philosophising after the modern school—and the perpetual refrain, 'I love you, Grace, but it is not to be.'

One sweet summer day followed another, and their liberty was undisturbed. Uncle James made the best use of his freedom, contrived to have business at Tunbridge one day and at Kingsbury the next, and had what the Yankees call 'a good time.' Grace went out fishing with her lover—went wandering along the winding bank of a delicious streamlet that twisted here and there through that not too well-watered country, and saw him do battle with the ancient pike, or capture an occasional barbel or half a dozen roach. A great deal of walking and talking went to a very little angling in these rambles. He cut her name upon the silver bark of an old beech, like any rustic Corydon. He could not help wondering what Augusta Vallory would have thought if she could have seen him engaged in that sentimental labour, with Grace watching him, enraptured.

Well, it was a sweet life, if it could have lasted. He thought of his own world with a dreary sigh.

'And yet by the end of a month I should be tired to death, I daresay,' he said to himself. 'How much better to break with my darling while our love retains all its freshness—to have each a sweet poetic memory to carry down to our graves! How much better not to have worn our emotions threadbare! I shall marry Augusta, and Grace will marry one of her cousins; and in the secret drawer of our desks we shall each keep a withered flower, or a lock of hair—"only a woman's hair"—in remembrance of a buried love.'

This was very comfortable philosophy, and for the man of the world who meant to make a name and a fortune, and live the life which seemed to him altogether best worth living, highly satisfactory—not quite so consolatory, perhaps, for the girl who had given him all her heart, and was to be left behind to vegetate with a farmer.

The days slipped away. The week was very near its end. Aunt Hannah wrote to inform her family that Priscilla Sprouter was going on admirably, and the baby in perfect health; and that, with the blessing of Providence, she, Mrs. James, would be home early on Monday morning—in time for the wash.

This was a signal for Hubert Walgrave's departure. He did not care to encounter the scrutinising gaze of the matron in his altered relations with Grace. The rustic idyl had lasted long enough. It was best that it should come to a sudden close. And yet—and yet—this man of the world counted the hours that were left to him before that black Monday, and looked forward with a foolish delight to the quiet of the long Sabbath—the church bells ringing hymn tunes across the golden corn-fields—the drowsy blissfulness of the old-fashioned garden, where flaunting hollyhocks proclaimed that autumn was at hand.

Grace woke with a strange tremulous feeling of mingled joy and sorrow on that Sunday morning. Another long day—with him! It was the last; but while it still lay before her it seemed such a sum of happiness. At twilight it would be different; but with the morning sun still shining she could not think of the evening. The garden was still bright and dewy when Hubert Walgrave came in quest of her, and she brighter and fresher than the morning itself. They walked together until breakfast time—went to church together afterwards—were together, more or less, all day long. There was no one to interrupt their perpetual *tête-à-tête*, even upon this day of rest; Mr. Redmayne improving the shining hours by refreshing slumber, sleeping off the effects of his unwonted dissipations at Kingsbury, that he might meet his wife with a serene front on the morrow; the two young men loafing about anywhere and everywhere—sitting on gates for the greater part of the day—conversing with stray ploughmen, or descending to the intellectual level of a passing crow boy.

Haleys' Sabbath! happy summer time among the flowering hollyhocks and fading roses! It was meet this should be the end. In all Grace Redmayne's young life this one bright week made up the sum of perfect happiness. In the fashionable world there are experienced beauties who count their happy seasons—summers that are one perpetual festival—who look back regretfully to the golden years in their calendar; but Grace's season was bounded by the span of seven days. She had her brief day of delight and brightness, like a flower or a butterfly, and that was all.

Towards evening Hubert Walgrave saw her face change. She grew very pale; her hands trembled as they touched the flowers; and when, in the course of their purposeless sauntering to and fro, one little hand rested on his arm, he found that it was icy cold.

'My darling, is there anything the matter?' he asked tenderly.

'Nothing; except that you are going away to-morrow. You do not expect me to be very happy to-night, do you?'

'But, my sweetest, you have known from the first that it must be so. We agreed to make your aunt's return the signal for our leave-taking. This parting has been before us from the beginning.'

'Yes, it has been before us; but I did not know it would be so bitter,' she said, and then burst into tears.

It was hard for him to bear, but a man who means to get on in the world must endure a good deal of hardship in the way of outraged feeling. He would have given a great deal in that moment to be able to clasp her to his heart, and claim her for his fair young wife; a great deal, but not quite all. If he had been an unsuccessful man, with nothing to sacrifice, it would have been easy to forget any differences of social position, slight at the best, and to cast in his fate with the woman he loved. But he was very far from being an unsuccessful man, and his standpoint was a critical one. He owed much to one strong hand that had helped him to mount several rungs of the ladder, and could help him higher. To marry this girl would be to forfeit the best friend he had; in plain words, would be simply ruin. A judge may marry his cook; but a rising young barrister, dependent on the breath of attorneys, has an important card to play in his marriage, and may make or mar himself thereby. Hubert Walgrave did not mean to imperil his chances. He had begun his career when a young man fresh from college with the determination to make a name for himself. There were circumstances in his life that made this desire keener in him than it is in most men. Nor had he ever swerved by a hair's breadth from that intention. This luckless passion for a farmer's daughter was his first folly.

He comforted her as best he might, dried her tears, beguiled her into smiling at him, a very faint wan smile.

'Shall I ever see you again after to-morrow morning, I wonder?'

she said piteously. And then she quoted *Romeo and Juliet*, which they had read together in the garden :

"O heaven, I have an ill-divining soul !
Methinks I see thee now I'm parting from thee,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb."

'My dearest, we shall meet again. I shall come to see you one day, when you are married perhaps.'

'O no, no, no !' she cried, shaking her head.

'O yes, yes, yes, Gracey ! This has been only a sweet poetic dream, this love of yours and mine. We are each to go our way in the world, and live our lives. You remember what your beloved Longfellow says :

"Life is real, life is earnest."

And my sweet Grace will be an honoured wife and the happy mother of children. That is what a woman's life was meant for, after all, Grace, to watch beside a cradle. I shall come to see you, and find you the fair central figure of a happy home. Your father will have returned by that time.'

The pale face whitened in the moonlight.

'My father !' the girl repeated with something like a shudder. 'You have almost made me forget my father.'

The morning came ; rosy-fingered Aurora in her opal car, and Mrs. James Redmayne in a chaise-cart. She arrived at Brierwood about breakfast-time—a metropolitan breakfast-time, that is to say—having risen at a preternaturally early hour in order to do forty miles and be at home in time for the washing. All the poetry of the cool shadowy old homestead seemed to vanish at the sight of her. There are people at whose coming all mystic creatures disperse ; people who carry with them everywhere a delightful atmosphere of commonplace, whose conversation is as interesting as a rule-of-three sum, whose countenances are as expressive of tender emotion as the back of a ledger. Mrs. James was one of these.

She gave her niece a mechanical kiss, with her eyes exploring the corners of the room all the while to see if the solemn rite of cleaning had been duly performed in her absence ; and finding nothing here to complain of, turned her scrutinising gaze upon the girl's face, and pronounced immediately that she was looking 'bilious.'

'You've been lolling about indoors all day, I daresay,' she remarked, 'instead of taking a healthy walk every morning.'

'No indeed, aunt Hannah,' protested Grace, blushing ; 'I've been out a good deal—for long walks.'

'O, you have, have you ?' said her aunt ; 'and pray are those pillow-cases mended yet ?'

'I've—almost—finished them.'

'Almost! You've never done more than almost finish any work I ever gave you to do. But that comes of sending girls to stuck-up boarding-schools. I've no common patience with such trumpery.'

'Is the baby a very nice one, aunt Hannah?' Grace inquired meekly, in the hope of giving a pleasant turn to the conversation.

'He's got the red-gum,' Mrs. James answered sharply; 'I don't believe I ever saw a child so speckled.'

'But he'll come right, I suppose, aunt?'

'O, he'll come right soon enough, I daresay; but as for your monthly nurses, of all the lazy lumber I ever had to do with, they're about the worst. If children could only be brought up to the month by machinery, so as to get rid of *them*, it would be a blessing to families. How's Mr. Walgry?'

'He's very well, aunt Hannah. Uncle James told you in his letter that he was going away, didn't he?'

'Well, yes, he said something about it; but it was as much as I could do to make top or tail of it. Your uncle's a poor scribe. When is he going?'

'To-day,' faltered Grace, dragging one of the ill-fated pillow-cases out of her work-basket, and studying a darn.

'To-day! That's uncommonly sudden. However, he's a good paymaster, and free to go when he likes. If one must take a lodger, one couldn't have one that would give less trouble. And we've made a fair profit out of him. I shall put from ten to fifteen pound in the savings-bank for your father out of what he's paid me.'

Mrs. James took off her bonnet, washed her face at a sink in the back-kitchen with the strongest yellow-soap, and a most profound indifference to the effect of such ablutions on her complexion, put on a clean cap, and then went to pay her respects to the departing lodger. His portmanteau and carpet-bag had been brought down into the old-fashioned low-ceilinged lobby, which served as a hall; the Kingsbury fly was at the door. Grace stood at the parlour-window, pale as a ghost, watching. Would he seek her out to say good-bye? or would he leave her without a word? The eyes of the world were on him now—would he play his cruel part coldly, and without heed of her anguish?

She heard his voice in the lobby, talking commonplace to her aunt, and listened as if every word had been inspiration.

'So sorry to leave you, Mrs. Redmayne,' he said, in his slow languid way. 'I did not believe I could have enjoyed country life so much. I have to thank you a thousand times for all your attention; nothing but an actual necessity to perform other engagements would induce me to leave you. I hope to be allowed to come again some day.'

'We shall be pleased to see you anywhen, Mr. Walgry,' re-

plied Mrs. James, in her blindest tones. 'I'm sure there never was a gentleman gave less trouble.'

Mr. Walgrave smiled faintly. One poor little innocent heart had been sorely troubled by his coming. He was a man of the world, but not quite iron; and he had a guilty feeling that his presence in that house had wrought evil.

The fly was at the door, his portmanteau and book-box bestowed upon the roof, and he had only a given time for the drive to Tunbridge junction; yet he lingered, looking round him doubtfully.

'I think I ought to say good-bye to your niece, Mrs. Redmayne,' he observed at last.

'You're very polite, I'm sure, sir; and I daresay Grace might take it unkind if you went away without wishing her good-morning. She's been brought up at boarding-school, and is full of fancies. Bless my soul, where is the girl? Grace!'

The parlour-door opened quickly at that shrill cry, and Grace appeared on the threshold, pale to the lips, scarcely able to stand. Happily for her, Mrs. James's attention was distracted at that moment by her son and heir, who had just contrived to smash a pane in the half-glass door with one end of the traveller's fishing-rod.

For a long time Grace Redmayne's image, as she looked at that moment, haunted Hubert Walgrave. The pale plaintive look, the despairing eyes, with a kind of wildness in them. Her image in many shapes was destined to haunt him all his life, but he never forgot that one look, that mute unconscious appeal.

He went to her as she stood by the door, and took her hand.

'I could not go away without wishing you good-bye, Grace,' he said. 'I have been telling your aunt how happy I have been here, and that I mean to come again—some day.'

He waited, half expecting her to speak, but she said nothing. The pale lips quivered slightly, and that was all.

'Good-bye,' he repeated; and then in a lower voice, 'Good-bye, and God bless you, my darling!'

He turned quickly away, shook hands with Mrs. Redmayne, and then with the elder of the lads, on whom he bestowed a couple of sovereigns for fishing-tackle; the house-servant had been already fee'd, and was smiling the smile of gratitude from the background. In another minute the driver smacked his whip, the wheels grated on the gravel, and Hubert Walgrave was gone.

'It makes us a full hour late for beginning the wash,' said aunt Hannah; 'but everything's in soak, and we've got a good drying day, that's one blessing.'

Grace dragged herself up to her room, somehow, groping blindly up the familiar old staircase, with a mist of bitter unshed tears before her eyes. O weary limbs! O heavy, heavy heart! Was there never again to be any joy for her upon this earth?

IMAGINARY LONDON

A delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

II. THE WIGGERY AND OLD BUCK-STREET, W.

THE History of Religious Superstition has yet to be written; and a most amazing performance it might prove, I should say. But *I* would rather not undertake the task of its composition, if you please; not being in the least ambitious of the martyrdom which society is always so cheerfully eager to inflict on those who, having picked out some plums of truth from the great doughy mass of ignorance, fanaticism, and falsehood, proclaim their discovery to the world at large. Horner delving in his corner, in the recesses of his Christmas-pie, may think himself a very clever fellow, and, holding up a juicy sultana-raisin—the gaby!—cry ‘What a good boy am I!’ He had better hold his noise. The world usually is not of the same opinion with Horner. It will frown upon him, cuff him, whip him, and (if it conveniently can) burn him at the stake. The spirit of bloody Mary, of Bonner, of Torquemada, is not yet (happily) extinct among religionists of any kind; for, without persecution, what is to become of the dignified clergy? *San benitos* are as necessary to the prosperity of an establishment as shovel-hats or lawn-sleeves; and there are few more touching literary productions than the major excommunication. Wouldn’t you like to excommunicate somebody, my dear sister? You know you would: you do it now every night with a dinner-bell, with a royal Red-book, with a bedroom candle. I know myself that I have several acquaintances whom I should dearly love to roast; and, trust me, if I could only get hold of the necessary writ *de hæretico comburendo*, I would never quarrel with Messrs. Cockerell as to the price of the necessary coals. Give me but two tons of the best Wallsend and a power of fagots, and, dear me, what an Altar of Friendship I would rear!

But, leaving religious superstition on one side, and taking into consideration the first section of this paper’s subject, the Wiggery, I am reminded of certain social superstitions which, in childhood’s unhappy days—I was a miserable boy—had the firmest of grasps on my mind, and which are not wholly banished from it now that I am sceptical, and hardened, and grizzled. These infatuations—in common with picture-books, playthings, and hardbake—I shared with a dear little sister, long since dead; and we would confer sometimes upon our mutual delusions, implanted in us Heaven knows how, or when, or by whom, and, after brief intervals of doubt, de-

termine that they were compact and perfect truths, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. We were a Father and Mother Newman on the smallest of scales, and formulated, quite unconsciously, a babyish Grammar of Assent. Now we lived in Regent-street, and (a lone little couple) used to go wandering in our play-time about the Quadrant, and Vigo-lane, and Sackville-street, and sometimes so far as Bond-street—although Piccadilly was forbidden ground save on Sundays—nursing harmless monsters, and conjuring up nonsensical chimeras. One of them was, that a negro crossing-sweeper somewhere near the County Fire Office was 'Bishop and Williams'—we gave him the combined names, as though he had been Lord Saye and Sele, or the Bishop of Sodor and Man—the man who murdered the Italian boy,* and that he had been cut down before life was extinct, and resuscitated by an eminent surgeon, who had subsequently and prudently advised him to blacken his face and hands, and assume the disguise of a crossing-sweeper, in order to escape the pursuit of the Royal Horse Guards Blue who were in constant pursuit of Bishop and Williams in order to re-hang him—we still adhered to the unities—at Traitors'-gate in the Tower of London.

We nourished at least a score more legends as extravagant as this; but I will not waste ink and paper in enumerating any more of them, save one, which is germane to the theme I have in hand. Port Mahon-lane, as travellers in Imaginary London know, merges at its upper extremity into Ballyshannon-gardens, which debouches into Old Buck-street, just opposite the establishment of Mr. J. W. Copernicus, the famous clock-maker and jeweller. In Ballyshannon-gardens is the Ballyshannon-arcade, just opposite Dundreary-street. But below the Arcade (or 'Cade,' as the vulgar boys call it), and on the same side of the way, is the Wiggery. What is the Wiggery? you will ask. A tavern, a street, an inn-of-court, a square? Well, the Wiggery isn't exactly any of these things; and if you press me hard, and drive me into a corner, and pose me with questions after the manner of Mr. Serjeant Ballantine cross-examining a witness, I can only reply that the Wiggery is the Wiggery.

Like Janus Bifrons it has two faces—not, as in the Double-Nightingale Combination case, two heads, but two fronts—excuse the Boyle-Rochism—one before, and one behind. Hie you into Piccadilly and stand over against the Wiggery Restaurant, a very old-established eating-house, and you will behold opening from the street on the opposite side a large court-yard. Piccadilly, I may parenthetically

* Although these monsters, Bishop and Williams, deserved to be hanged fifty times over, and drawn and quartered into the bargain, it is a curious fact that the 'Italian boy' was never murdered at all—at least by them. The victim of the bloodthirsty resurrection men was a grazier's boy from Lincolnshire, whom they picked up in Smithfield.

observe, is nearly the only street in—not Imaginary but real—London which possesses court-yards. At the end of this area is the façade of a lofty mansion of dun-coloured brick with dingy stone dressings of dingy gray, architecturally belonging, I should say, to the earlier and most tasteless portion of the Georgian era. A door in the centre of this façade is reached by a tall flight of steps, and the portal itself conducts—whither? Into the Wiggery, I assume; but I have no positive knowledge of the subject, and my assumption is only grounded on the study of the topographical bearings of the structure. I have never yet had the courage to ascend those stairs, to enter that door, and to ask the first person I met, ‘Is this the Wiggery or not?’

Returning then by Lord George Germaine-street (a thoroughfare full of fashionable tailors and bill-discounters) into Port Mahon-lane, just as it is promoted into Ballyshannon-gardens, I come upon another doorway—open, broad, but low-browed, and guarded by a breast-high railing. Through that railing five-and-thirty years ago how often have my small sister and I looked wistfully into what was to us a marvellous perspective of girders and columns, and rails and doors and pens before them, like some great sheepfold without any sheep—like some Garden of the Hesperides without any apples! Now this I knew to be the Wiggery; but was that door in Piccadilly its only outlet? What was the Wiggery, and who lived there? We trembled to inquire, for there was a board hung to the rails bearing the legend of ‘No thoroughfare;’ and the garden was moreover guarded by a dragon in the shape of a beadle—one of the awfullest Beadles I ever remember to have seen. He had nothing in common with the portly, jovial parish beadle, the functionary who, albeit it was his painful duty to cane the little boys on Monday for letting pegtops fall in church on Sunday, could yet occasionally unbend, and, with a great bouquet at his button-hole, cheerfully marshal the charity-boys when they set forth, headed by the rector and his churchwardens, to beat the bounds. He had nothing in common with the stalwart, handsome, full-whiskered janitors of the Ballyshannon-arcade; officials whom I always took to have been once upon a time footmen in the service of the nobility and gentry, but who, having become a little too stout to jump up behind the carriage, or carry the lapdog behind my lady in Kensington-gardens, and disdaining to become hall-porters, had accepted the dignified post of beadles in the Arcade. I call it dignified; but I might qualify it as well as being in the highest degree delicate. The guardian of the Ballyshannon-arcade is an arbiter of the elegancies. His life is passed in a refined, an inspissated atmosphere redolent of pomatum, Paris bonnets, bronze-kid boots, pink-silk stockings, elastic corsets, scented soap, artificial flowers, imitation jewelry, lavender-kid gloves, and stuff for dyeing black hair straw colour. Moreover, on

his fiat depends whether the shabbily-dressed boy shall be allowed to pass through the aristocratic Passage de Ballyshannon. He may stop him, with a stern 'Halloa, you-sir!' and warn him that his pantaloons are not quite up to the Ballyshannon mark. He must discriminate between the boy with a parcel and the boy with a bundle. The former may be tolerated, if he does not loiter before the bonnet shops, and forbears to whistle. The latter must be driven from the Ballyshannon approaches, even as the Peri was driven from Paradise. Nor was the Beadle of the Wiggery of kindred, typically, to that vast fat man whose gold-laced stomach used to block-up the narrow postern of the gate of the old British Museum at Montagu House. As for the India-House Beadle—a toastmaster at night, so they whispered—and who only patrolled the colonnade in Leadenhall-street to cool his fevered blood after last eve's potations of 'thirty-four port and peculiar Madeira, that gorgeous creature in the scarlet gaberdine, and the cocked-hat which loomed large as the fore-and-after of an admiral of the fleet, might have looked on the Beadle of the Wiggery with as much contempt as Goliath of Gath felt for little David. He—of the Wiggery—was a weazened, diminutive, and spiteful-looking old man, in a rusty drab greatcoat, and with a tarnished-laced band to his hat, and an aspect which was generally murky, not to say mildewed. He had red ferret-like eyes, and blinked at us from his point of vantage behind the railings, till, sometimes, in terror we fled to the Ballyshannon-arcade (of which we were free), and spent an hour there looking at the toy-shops. When the Beadle of the Wiggery walked to and fro, it was with that restless yet monotonous jerking kind of motion, beginning with a run, degenerating into a prowl, and ending with a sharp turn, of a wild animal in a cage. Prisoners have this kind of what I may term zoological walk. Ship captains have it. Head waiters in restaurants, and shop-walkers at large linendrapers, and literary men whose only exercise is the perambulation of their studies, have it. It is the walk clogged by restriction—the moral log, the virtual ball-and-chain, the 'Thus far shalt thou go but no farther' caveat.

We used to be direly terrified at the sight of this eminently disagreeable old man—he has been gathered to his fathers, I should say, for at least twenty years; so that I cannot be libelling anybody—and it may be that his forbidding aspect formed the basis for the superstitious belief we entertained that nobody was allowed to go down the Wiggery. Emphatically, nobody. There was no need to write *Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate*, over the gateway, since nobody was allowed to enter it. It was sacrosanct, and the ground was not to be trodden by any human feet save the beadle's. What kept them there? Lions and tigers? Caverns full of pearls and rubies and carved ivory-work, as in that Schatzkammer at Dres-

den? State prisoners? We hit upon it at last. There was a wood inside the Wiggery, and the Sleeping Beauty was lying there, comfortably tucked up between the sheets in a four-post bed. The king and queen were asleep—his majesty in his parlour, over his ledgers and money-bags; her majesty in the kitchen, with a French roll in one hand, and a pot full of Narbonne honey in the other. The maid was asleep in the garden, still clutching the inner garment which she should have hung on the clothes-line; and the blackbird which had sinister designs on her nose had tucked his head under his wing, and was snoozing on the branch of a sour apple-tree. The cook was asleep, with her head in the dripping-pan. The foolish fat scullion snored among the plates and dishes. The house-dog snoozed in his kennel. The cat dozed on the wall, quite unconscious of that blackbird, on whom, had she been awake, she would so dearly like to have lunched. With gladsome Piccadilly hard by; with the coaches of the grandees rattling along Old Buck-street; with sprightly Prince Fur-collar-street within a stone's-throw; with the clattering and rumbling of the roaring looms of time; with this great seething stormy *London* (Imaginary London, mind),—somniales covered all over as with a cloak. And there were two gates to the Wiggery, and one was of ivory, and one was of horn. Sleep on, O Wiggery, and thank heaven for the slumber which can seal our eyelids and drown our senses in the sweet opiate of indifference to the mean, the common, and the base disturbances which may be rampant round us! Let us envy the man who can go to sleep at a stupid dinner-party, and bask on the shores of dreamland while the Rev. Mr. Puzzle-text is floundering through his sermon; who can walk down Cheapside in a state of coma, and go through the part of Amina in the *Somnambula* while he is being badgered by a registrar in bankruptcy, or while he is writing a leading article about the vestry of St. Pancras, or sitting at a board-meeting of the Great Desert of Gobi Gold, Silver, and Opal Mining Company. I have heard of a statesman, who was Secretary of State for the Home Department, who used to make up his betting-book while replying to the usual bombardment of questions from the metropolitan members. He was a somnambulist. He had the glorious faculty of abstraction. The worst of it is, that Amina sometimes manages in her somnambulism to get into Count Rodolfo's bed; and then Lisa makes mischief, and Elvino is jealous, and there is the deuce to pay; nor is Amina always so lucky as to drop her chamber-candlestick and kick over the tile into the mill-race at the right moment. I have seen Lord Penzance shake his head at Amina's explanation; and yet I was sure that the poor dear child was as innocent as Mr. Scott Russell in the 'Alliance' business.

Dreams, dreams—nothing but dreams. Yet surely visions are allowable in Imaginary London. I warned you that I was not about to tell the truth, and that my purpose was duplicity and fraud. The

real Wiggery, for aught I choose to own, may have been the Lowther-arcade, or that defunct arcade on part of whose site the Gaiety Theatre now stands—dreary old Exeter-change. But my imaginary Wiggery was simply a very large and old-fashioned London mansion, on whose extensive grounds—which abut on the gardens of Ramoth-Gilead House, erst the palace of his Grace the Duke of Ramoth-Gilead, but now occupied by the Royal Academy of Sign-Painters, the University of Göttingen (London branch), the Misogynical, Albuminous, Præ-Scorbutic Societies, and other learned bodies—had been erected divers roomy sets of roomy chambers, let at high rents to wealthy bachelors. Such was the Wiggery; and such it is to this day. When long years had passed away, and my sister was dead, and I had changed my skin, and muscle, and bone, and heart—we change them all, the *savants* say, every seven years or so—I came back to the Wiggery, and was even able to claim acquaintance with some of the wealthy bachelors who dwelt within its mysterious precincts. One janitor after another had succeeded the wearied little old man of my nonage; but I never ceased (under a bold exterior) to be inwardly frightened at the beadle.

Yes; I have known gentlemen who lived in the Wiggery—nay, have been invited to breakfast by some of their number. For example, there was tall Mr. Fitzcarrat, the tallest man you ever saw out of one of those establishments (integrally connected with popular recreation) in which tall men are shown professionally. Mr. Prondhoe Fitzcarrat was thin in proportion to his tallness, and proud in proportion to both. I cannot understand how a short fat man can possess any pride at all. Fitzcarrat couldn't help being haughty. He came of a family of immense antiquity, whose Norman descent was one of the least of their claims to blue blood. I think they could boast of a Roman Consul or an Exarch of Ravenna in their line; and their lineage getting rather rusty (through an admixture of lord mayors and country squires' daughters, and people of that sort), they had refurbished it up again by bringing in a Spanish countess of the *sangre azul*, and a French princess of the Rohan stock. You have been told of the picture of the Deluge belonging to the Dukes of Levis, in which a gentleman is seen entering Noah's ark with a red box under his arm labelled 'Papers relating to the Levis family'? You have heard Duke Alfonso in *Lucrezia Borgia* instruct Rustighello to procure a phial which he will find 'behind the picture of Hercules, one of my ancestors'? Well, those were the kind of families which might have claimed acquaintance with Mr. Prondhoe Fitzcarrat's. He had a long saturnine face, gray eyes with drooping lids, mathematically-cut whiskers—iron-gray when I knew him—and a chin-tuft. Had you presumed (which was unlikely) to ask him why he did not wear moustaches, he would have asked you coldly *whether* you took him for a courier or a bil-

liard-sharper. Yet Fitz was not cold; he had, on the contrary, as warm and affectionate a heart as ever beat; he was only gloomy. Some of his friends declared that his melancholy arose from the obstinacy of the Committee of Privileges of the Lords in refusing to recognise his claim to the two or three dormant peerages he claimed; others said that he was a widower, and had never been consoled for the loss of his wife; others that he had loved and lost, without ever having been married at all. He didn't *look* as though he had ever gone through the ordeal matrimonial; and as a rule, you can always discern the man of whom the reverend gentleman behind the altar-rails has asked that remarkably embarrassing series of questions. The rule fails to hold with the other sex. In the case of a woman you can't be certain about anything. She wears a mask from the cradle to the grave.

Fitzcarract was the rigidest of Catholics; no red-hot pervert, who bores you with his new-fledged orthodoxy until you wish to choke him with his 'functions,' and 'stations,' and 'retreats,' and 'triduos,' and 'novenas,' and the like, but a good old self-concentrated contented Papist, many of whose forefathers, I have no doubt, were hanged, drawn, and disembowelled for conscience' sake in the days of good Queen Bess: to say nothing of the fines and confiscations they had endured under the Commonwealth. Be sure that in his dreary old Tudor mansion in Norfolk there was a 'priest's hole' by the side of the chimney in some upper chamber, where of old time the persecuted ministers of the ancient faith had taken refuge from the pursuit of the sheriff of the county or the pursuivants of the Star-Chamber; and that in some antique old chest at Proudhoë Hall there yet mouldered a moth-eaten set of vestments erst assumed by his reverence from St. Omer, when, with all the doors and windows bolted and barred up, the Catholic household heard mass against the statute in that case made and provided. But Fitzcarract never bored you with his papistry; and if he did wear a hair shirt, or the knotted cord of the third order of St. Francis, under his black-satin stock and crimson-velvet waistcoat—he was about the last English gentleman I ever knew who was thus outwardly arrayed—he failed to inform you of the fact. Still, he looked the Romanist from top to toe. He had a seraphine in his chambers—the predecessor of the harmonium—and at times discoursed grand old music of Mozart or Paesello. I don't know whether instrumental psalmody was contrary to the laws and observances of the Wiggery; but his musical performances suddenly ceased. He took to collecting books in velum bindings, and oak carvings; and then he went abroad. Many years afterwards I read in *Galvani* the notice of the death of Godfrey Proudhoë Fitzcarract, Esq., at his residence near Milan. His residence! I think the residence was the famous convent of the Certosa. Fitz was just the man to have chambers in the Wiggery,

and after that apprenticeship to seclusion retire into still more private life as a Carthusian monk. He was very rich; and so much as he could not bequeath for pious purposes—his estates, to wit—went to his nephew, young Rapid Fitzcarract, of the Hotstream Guards, who managed at about the same time to tumble into a baronetcy belonging to a different branch of the family. Sir Rapid Proudhoë Fitzcarract did not make much of his title and estates. He managed, I think, within a very brief period to make ducks-and-drakes of both. He was always in or out of the money-lenders' dens in Little Jehoshaphat-street, in Tigleth-Pileser-place, in Naboth's-gardens, all in the parish of St. James's. Mr. Maha-shahal-hash-baz, that astute diamond-merchant and runner of race-horses, had, as he candidly confessed, the baronet 'to rights;' and Mr. Capstring the military tailor made a mint of money out of the foolish young spendthrift. This was the same Mr. Capstring who afterwards opposed Fitz so virulently in Basinghall-street, and whose advocate, Mr. Pennylesse (since promoted to be a county-court judge), had such withering things to say about the 'reckless extravagance' of the bankrupt. Poor young Bart.! poor Fitz the second! Better to have kept up his uncle's old chambers in the Wiggery, and to have stayed there, strumming Mozart and Paesello on the seraphine. He came to a bad end. The last time I heard of him was at a country theatre, where he was playing the part of the languid 'swell' in *Caste*, under the assumed name of Mr. Walter Vavasour.

There is, for all that, yet another Guardsman living in the Wiggery, at 95x, I think. He belongs to the new school of the Household Brigade, and does *not* belong to the Army and Navy Club, which he considers naughty. He does not smoke. He enjoys the acquaintance of Lord Shaftesbury. He is a member of the Society for the Relief of Distress; is a district-visitor of an East-end parish; takes in the *Sunday at Home*, and is suspected of contributing occasional articles to *Chatterbox*, *Sunshine*, the *Playmate*, and similar infantile publications. You are not to place any faith in the malignant reports of his working in Berlin wool in the brief intervals between his regimental and philanthropic avocations. He has eight sisters, four of whom are married into the Church; and his name is Captain Goodchild.

A different, a very different, ah, a dreadfully different dweller in the Wiggery (415q) is Rear-Admiral Spankerboom—that wicked old man. He has had his quarters in the Wiggery time out of mind; and I really think that the weazened savage little Beadle, whom I dreaded in my childhood, must have been coxswain of the Admiral's gig ere he retired into civil life. He (the Admiral) ought to have been Sir Thersites Spankerboom, and a K.C.B.; but his temper was against him, and his disagreements with the Admiralty had been innumerable. He swore—dear me, how he swore! He

boasted that while in commission he had flogged more men than any post-captain in her Majesty's navy, and used to tell terrible stories of a boatswain's mate under his command who flogged left-handed. 'And after him, sir,' he would say, 'the right-handed fellows would come in, and cross the cuts, and the skin would come off in lozenges, sir—in lozenges!' He wanted everybody to be flogged—soldiers, sailors, schoolboys, schoolgirls, garrotters, pickpockets, beggars, and paupers. 'Give 'em the cat, sir; give 'em four dozen,' he would growl; 'tie 'em up and give 'em a warm jacket; and you won't hear any more about destitution.' I am quite sure, if the members of the Senior Benighted Service Club could only be persuaded to elect Admiral Spankerboom a member of the committee, not a week would elapse before he moved a resolution to introduce the cat-o'-nine-tails as a means of maintaining discipline among the waiters. As it is, he is constrained to restrict his penchant for manual correction to throwing bootjacks and hairbrushes at his man-servant; a philosophical Irishman, who contents himself with the quiet remonstrance, 'An' ye think it's good you're doin' yerself by flyin' into thim passions, let alone curin' yerself of the gout.' He comes home late at night from the club, this terrible Admiral, and drinks cold rum-and-water, and swears. He is not devoid of education, and writes fiery letters to the newspapers against naval mismanagement. It is only in Imaginary London that such characters exist. In real London, a savage intolerant old brute like Rear-Admiral Spankerboom would not be tolerated in decent society.

They pointed out to me lately the chambers—the windows overlooking Ballyshannon-gardens—where Blunderbore, editor of the *Ogre*, a celebrated weekly newspaper, used to live. I entirely dismiss from my mind, and I earnestly hope you will do the same, the stories of Blunderbore living on raw pork-chops and artichokes soused in acetic acid; of his imbibing a peculiar beverage, consisting of spirits of wine, naphtha, hellebore, arrack, morphia, and hydrate of chloral; of his smoking betel-nut, haschisch, and saltpetre in a pipe, the bowl of which was carved in the form of a death's-head; of his burning blue fire in his grate, and writing leading-articles in his blood by the light of four corpse-candles. He kept his coffin under his bed, and a tame wolf chained up in his cupboard. Nonsense! You might as well tell me that on his library-shelves there were no books save the *Newgate Calendar*, *God's Revenge against Murder*, and the works of Tom Paine, Peter Aretin, Jack Wilkes, and the Marquis de Sade. I happen to know that Blunderbore was a very excellent customer at Morell's and at Fortnum and Mason's, in the way of truffles, *andouillettes de Troyes*, and *terrines of foie gras*; and that he gave ninepence apiece for his Regalias Britannicas at Mr. Carrera's. Now, a man who gives ninepence apiece for his cigars cannot be half a bad fellow. The *Ogre* was, notwithstanding these

mitigating circumstances, a terrible paper. *Guerra al cuchillo* was Blunderbore's motto journalistically. He cut up everybody. Scalpel, the briefless barrister; Cleaver, a fellow of St. Poleaxe Coll., Oxford; Busby, one of the masters of Shamblesborough High School; and the Rev. Dr. Silkstone, Rector of Scuttleborough, were his chief assistants in the slashing department. It was in the *Ogre*, under Blunderbore's management, that poor Horace was told that he had no knowledge of life; that Virgil was informed that he was a poor hand at narrative; that Livy was accused of frivolity, and Tacitus of prolixity; that Cicero's law and Vitruvius's architecture were so awfully mauled; and that Ovid was sneeringly reminded that he might be a very clever fellow, but that he knew nothing about love-making. As for the ladies, they 'caught it' much worse than the men did in the appalling pages of the *Ogre*. Poor Miss Sappho nearly went out of her mind when her sonnets were reviewed (Busby of Shamblesborough was the executioner in that business); and Miss Eloïse Fulbert, who had written those sweet letters to the Rev. Abelard Paraclete, and had been imprudent enough to publish them, was charged in the *Ogre* (Silkstone was the accuser) with having stolen her most impassioned passages from *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. I never saw Blunderbore but twice in my life. On the first occasion he was emerging from the Wiggery; and, to my amazement, I beheld a thin, wan, threadpaper-looking kind of man, with hay-coloured hair and blue spectacles. It happened that it rained slightly, and Blunderbore unfurled an umbrella and walked gingerly towards Old Buck-street. 'Goodness gracious!' I inwardly exclaimed, 'that man put up an umbrella! Why did he not stand, his arms akimbo, like Ajax defying the lightning, and rebuke the rain?' The next and last time I met him was at Covent-garden Market; and, upon my word, the awful Blunderbore was buying a bouquet at Mrs. Buck's in the central arcade.

I mentioned Old Buck-street just now; and it strikes me as being high time that I should walk thither myself, as gingerly as may be; for I have tarried too long at the wicket of the Wiggery. Perforce have I left unchronicled the mass of (imaginary) denizens in the rare old place; peers, M.P.s, bachelor bankers, Q.C.s, book-worms, anti-quaries, dandies—there are yet a few real dandies left in Imaginary London, and they have the supremest contempt for the 'swells' and staid old country squires, who abide at their seats during the hunting season, and prefer chambers in the Wiggery to rooms at an hotel when they come to town. I leave them reluctantly; but Fate will have it, and Jove adds his force; and away I wander, past the Ballyshannon-arcade, and up Ballyshannon-street, till I find myself in the thick of a block of aristocratic equipages in Old Buck-street.

It is still—for all the glittering tinsel pretensions of that upstart Prince Fur-collar-street—the most aristocratic thoroughfare

in London; and some of the very best of London shops—jewellers, stationers, milliners, nicknack-sellers, old-china and curiosity dealers—are to be found within its precincts. Mr. J. W. Copernicus's establishment, full of dazzling jewelry, and buhl clocks, and bronze statuettes, and candelabra, is in itself an international exhibition; and higher up, towards New Buck-street, the ultimate goal of which is Great Gallows-street, leading to Wide-park-corner, the Alabaster Arch (Swellfoot the Tyrant's *magnum opus* in architecture, next to his celebrated Pagoda at Capri), you shall find the trinket treasures of Mr. Turnstile, that jeweller-in-ordinary to crowned heads, and purveyor of diamond decorations to the corps diplomatique; of Messrs. Rosecut and Purewater; and of the famous manufacturer of empresses' diadems, autocrats' sceptres, and the jewelled mitres of patriarchs of the Eastern Church, Mr. Harry Persepolis; while just round the corner in Aqueduct-street Mr. Edwin Fleeter displays his marvellous collection of Egyptian earrings and Assyrian bangles, bracelets that might have encircled the dusky arm of Cleopatra, and necklaces of winged bulls that might have spanned the tawny throat of Salammô. Talk of the riches of Cheapside and Cornhill—pinchbeck, my dear sir, mere pinchbeck! Talk of the Crown jewels in the Tower! Mr. W. Growler has a ruby as big as a pigeon's egg in his waistcoat-pocket, and half-a-dozen Koh-i-noors (or their big brothers) lie *perdus* in a cigar-box in Mr. Harry Persepolis's fire-proof safe. Ah, the secrets these traffickers in gems are aware of! Mr. Tribulation Triball, the great pawnbroker of the adjacent Piccadilly, could unravel a few mysteries if he chose, and Mr. Maha-shahal-hash-baz could tell you a few queer stories, if he chose, respecting young gentlemen possessing her Majesty's commission; but for moving tales—for tragedies that would give you goose-flesh, and cause the hair thereof to stand up—I would back the Old Buck-street jewellers, from Mr. J. W. Copernicus to Mr. Harry Persepolis inclusive. *They* know all about the *affaire du collier*: how poor Marie Antoinette was hoodwinked; how Professor Cagliostro, the spiritual medium, swindled that idiotic Cardinal de Rohan; and how that naughty Madame de la Motte ran off with her disreputable husband (late of the Mexican cavalry) to Hombourg, where the criminal pair pawned all poor M. Boehmer's diamonds at the 'Lombard,' and lost the proceeds by backing the *douze derniers* at roulette. Old Buck-street is the custodian of half the financial secrets of the peerage. Mr. Turnstile knows when the beautiful young Duchess of Tadmor exchanged her jewels for paste. Messrs. Rosecut and Purewater know what became of the emerald locket which the Crown Prince of Tartary purchased of them (on credit), ostensibly as a wedding present to his sister, when she married the Bahamagash of Abyssinia. Did the emerald locket really go into the jewel-casket of the lovely and accomplished bride of the Bahamagash, or did

it find its way into the possession of little Maggie Quivershanks, who dances breakdowns in sky-blue satin knickerbockers at the Royal Depravity Theatre? But the jewel-merchants are discreet men: they know, but they reveal not; and the honour of imprudent duchesses and infatuated crown princes is safe in their keeping. Still, if I had been the Bahamagash (he is a dreadfully embarrassed potentate, and emeralds of large size are worth money), I should have raised a disturbance about that locket. I am afraid that in the end that improvident Maggie Quivershanks 'swopped' it away to old Mrs. Endor, the ladies' wardrobe-shop-keeper of Witch-street, for a sealskin jacket, a purple moire, a Dutch pug, and a ten-pound note.

Vain imagination! The Wiggery and Old Buck-street fade away, and I am left to contemplate inarticulate bricks and mortar, a kerb-stone that is mute, and a vast area of macadam, which declines to volunteer any information. I never knew anybody who lived in the Wiggery save a solitary lord, and he died; and right certain I am that there are no two such jewellers and goldsmiths extant as Mr. J. W. Copernicus and Mr. Harry Persepolis. I must have had something indigestible for supper last night, and have dreamed strange dreams.

SOME CURIOUS OLD CUSTOMS

BY ASTLEY H. BALDWIN

It would form a most interesting work, if some learned antiquary would collect for us, into a tangible form, the curious old customs of this our island; the only objection to such work would be, that it would extend to so many volumes, that the space of an ordinary lifetime would scarcely suffice for their perusal.

Even in London, which nowadays gives itself entirely to the prosaic business of money-making, we still retain some curious, not to say ridiculous customs. Many more have of necessity become obsolete, but sufficient yet remain to show that 'use' really becomes 'second nature' to such an extent, that any custom once established—no matter how absurd and ridiculous—may retain its hold on the people for centuries.

The University of Oxford (which is perhaps, take it for all in all, the most *conservative* spot on the face of the habitable globe) has many most curious old customs, established centuries ago, and to which the glorious weather-beaten city clings with praiseworthy tenacity. Queen's College (founded in 1340 by Robert Eglesfield, confessor to Queen Philippa, consort of Edward III.) has two or three of these ancient customs. Everybody likely to read these pages has heard of the ceremony of bringing in the boar's head on Christmas-day at this college, whilst a carol, partly in English, partly in Latin, is sung. It is not therefore necessary for us to give a detailed account of that ceremony, or to quote that oft-repeated carol. But there is another yet more curious custom practised at this college on New-Year's-day, of which perhaps many of our readers have not heard. This it is. On that day the bursar of the college (the gentleman appointed to receive and *disburse* payments) presents to every member of it a threaded needle, saying, 'Take this, and use thrift.' The words, '*aiguille et fil*'—needle and thread—form a sort of pun on the name of the founder of the college, Eglesfield.

University College, which claims to be the oldest in Oxford, and to have been founded by Alfred the Great (although Merton is the college that can produce the oldest title-deeds), has a very curious custom. This is called 'chopping the tree,' and the performance of it is as follows. On Easter Sunday the cook of the college adorns a small tree, or a good-sized bough of a large one, with wreaths and flowers, and places it in or near the buttery. The members of the college all dine in hall, according to the University custom. After

dinner, each member, from the master of the college down to the youngest undergraduate present, as he leaves the hall chops at the tree with a small axe placed there for the purpose. Then comes the gist of the whole business: the cook (all the college cooks are men-cooks) stands by with a plate in his hand, into which every member of the college, after he has had his 'chop' at the tree, drops a fee. This fee is, for the head of the college (termed 'master'), half-a-guinea; for the fellows, five shillings each; and for the undergraduates, half-a-crown. The custom must be a truly delightful one for the cook, and probably was originally instituted to furnish an adequate income for that important functionary; just as at Eton it was once the custom to collect a sum of money termed 'salt,' to defray the expenses of the captain of the school, when he went up to the University. Oxford cooks, it may be remarked, are important personages, receive large salaries and perquisites, and very often acquire comfortable fortunes.

The College of All Souls has a quaint custom called 'hunting the mallard.' It is said that, when the college was originally founded (in 1437 by Henry Chichele, Bishop of St. Davids, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), the workmen, in digging for the foundations, unearthed from a drain a splendid mallard. This was caught, roasted, and eaten (not much amongst so many), and was seized upon as the pretext for instituting a college 'custom.' Accordingly on the fourteenth of January, which is the foundation day, the cook procures the largest and finest mallard to be had for money, and when it is introduced a song is sung, the burden of which is:

'O swapping, swapping mallard.'

Magdalen College (founded in 1456 by William of Waynfleet, Bishop of Winchester, and Lord High Chancellor) has a far more pleasing and picturesque custom. On the first of May, at four o'clock in the morning, the choristers of that society (sixteen in number) ascend the splendid tower of the college, and there usher in Mayday with songs, to the great delight of all who assemble to hear them. As we have listened to this performance ourselves in our undergraduate days, we can speak from experience as to the pleasing effect of the 'ring' of the pure boyish voices on the soft morning air.

We may perhaps state here, that it was formerly a custom in Oxford, when the sovereign paid a visit to the University, for the students to perform a play, for his or her pleasure. Thus we hear that Elizabeth was entertained, in 1566, with *Progne*, a Latin tragedy; a comedy (the name of which we cannot call to mind); and a part of *Palamon and Arcite*. It is recorded of the performance of *Progne*, that 'it liked her Majesty not at all;' but she was so pleased with the performance of one of the scholars, who played a female part in some other piece, that she 'did especially commend him for his vir-

ginal modesty and simplicity,' and that she made him a present of eight guineas, a largish sum in those days. James I. (although that pedantic king set up for a learned man), we are told, did not like this fashion of performing plays at all; on the contrary, he *went to sleep* during the performance. As for his queen, it is recorded that she 'waxed exceeding wrath' at what she thought the indelicacy of the dresses of the performers. When Elizabeth visited Cambridge, the sister University, she was entertained with the *Aulularia* of Plautus, performed in the chapel of King's College (which we should now think an act of desecration), and a play called *Dido*. She listened to these with much seeming attention; but whatever she thought of their performance (and she herself, as a most erudite scholar, was well competent to judge), she was so well pleased with her reception by the University, that it was said: 'If provision of ale and beer for the retinue could have been made, she would have staid some days longer, so well was she content.' She personally, at the request of the Chancellor, addressed the students in a Latin oration, which surprised and pleased everybody by its unstudied elegance and its grammatical correctness. And here, lest we (as King James said of the University plays) should become 'diffuse and tedious,' we will refrain from the temptation of extending this short paper.



Vagner, del.

W. M. R. Quick, sc.

FORGOTTEN

UNDER the trees that afternoon,
Across the meadows and down the lane,
Sloped the sun to the West full soon,
Never a shadow nor cloud of pain :
Do you ever think of it now ?

How fresh the breeze from off the sea,
Bending the bluebells before our feet,
Bearing perfume from hill to lea !
O life, it seem'd never so sweet :
Do you ever think of it now ?

What did we say ? I cannot tell—
True love is very silent sometimes ;
But your words, I remember well
When we parted there beneath the limes :
Do you ever think of them now ?

Only a year ago to-day,
Yes, only a year ago ; and yet
The golden light has pass'd away,
The summer sun has for ever set :
Do you ever think of it now ?

Dead is the past, and evermore
Dead is the love you whisper'd that day ;
Dead, alas, are the hopes I bore,
Dead is my life ; yet I only pray
That you may not think of it now.

W. A. LAW.

HOW THE 'GADFLY' FAILED

A Newspaper Episode

I.

THE Champion Bill and Gigantic Circular Printing Company, which, for the sake of brevity, it may be well in future to indicate in the course of this narrative by its initials, was not a success. Not even its most sanguine shareholders could go so far as to say that there was any prospect of its being a success. The printing engines were standing idle, the workmen complained in very outspoken terms that their wages were not paid with the regularity which they had a right to expect, and the foreman was at the present moment assuming an attitude strongly suggestive of strike. Persons who had employed the C. B. G. C. P. C. had been heard to say that there was a lack of business method about the whole concern; that their orders were not executed with the punctuality and dispatch which the circulars of the company had promised; and so had it come to pass that orders had become fewer and fewer, till at last it seemed that they had begun altogether to vanish.

'An infernally nice business this!' said Major Roarer, when he came down to bleed the company's coffers for funds wherewith to carry on his afternoon whist campaign at the Pandemonium Club. 'Not a sou to be had! What the deuce is up, Tan, eh?' And the Major expressed himself in the vigorous fashion in which 'an officer should.'

'Tell you what it is,' replied Mr. Tan—Mr. Tan and Major Roarer, it may be observed, were the two prime originators, and now almost the only two remaining shareholders, of the company—'you've played this sort of game once too often. Always told you it never could stand it—frisking the till, as Muffet' (Mr. Muffet was the sole clerk and secretary of the establishment) 'calls it, every afternoon. Hang it, Roarer, you've never given the concern a chance!'

Here Major Roarer rose from his chair, opened the door, called for Mr. Muffet, who responded in person, and the pair engaged for several minutes in a close colloquy. The result was, that Major Roarer reappeared in the apartment dignified as the 'board-room.' 'Tan,' he said, 'meet me at the club at seven-thirty sharp, and bring Simpkins and Reefer' (Messrs. S. and R. were two gentlemen who still had some faint remaining interest in the C. B. G. C. P. C.), 'and we'll see what can be done.' When Major Roarer gave a command, he was accustomed to have it executed; and so on this occa-

sion, thinking it superfluous to wait for Mr. Tan's reply, he strode out of the room, like Ajax *makra bibas*, as a certain gentleman of strongly-defined classical tastes, to whom we shall have occasion later to introduce the reader, was in the habit of saying, stepped into his very neat brougham, which was waiting at the door, and told the coachman to drive to the Pandemonium. 'And look sharp, mind you,' added the Major.

It was a curious phenomenon in Major Roarer's chequered existence, that he was never without that perfectly-fitted brougham and that pair of first-rate horses. The Major might complain of the tightness of the money market, and make facetious allusions to the frequent salutations on paper he was in the habit of getting from her Majesty; but none of these things made any difference in the gallant gentleman's exterior. Men whispered at the club, when, not on one occasion, but many, the Major had adverse runs of luck at Newmarket or Epsom, that 'Roarer was about done for.' Never was club opinion more lamentably wrong. The Major 'always came up to the scratch smiling,' as Mr. Muffet would say. His friends might fancy they heard the crash of consummated ruin round Major Roarer; but in a few days' time he was visible again at the club, fresh as ever, cool as ever, and apparently more prosperous than ever. Ready money the gallant gentleman was always provided with in plenty—how nobody knew, and nobody cared. Some said it was his aunt, others said his wife, others again attributed it entirely to his whist. 'He's a rummun, is the Major,' Mr. Muffet would inform you; 'have to get up precious early to take him in. Don't think he's sharp? Bless you, that's all his manner—that is. He looks upon all this sort of thing as a lark; but he'd beat your American Jew of Scotch extraction, would the Major, for all that, in a canter, if he was to try.'

Such was Major Roarer—one of those social sphinxes, those incarnate enigmas in whom modern civilisation abounds—and such was sapient Mr. Muffet's opinion of him.

II.

'I'm the best financier of the lot of you,' were Major Roarer's opening words when his business colleagues met him that evening, as agreed upon, at the Pandemonium Club. 'I've been in wonderful form this afternoon. When I was down at the office, Muffet gave me every halfpenny he could spare, and see what I've done for you;' and the Major pulled out a rouleau of bank-notes from his side-pocket. 'So much for afternoon whist. A five-pound note is a pretty thing, and there are twenty of them there. That's what I call employing one's talent and improving the shining hour.'

Mr. Tan, Mr. Reefer, and Mr. Simpkins were compelled to confess that Major Roarer was a master.

'And now,' went on the Major, 'I've just seen Jack Shuttle. Gadfly's at five to one for the Derby. I vote we put this money on him. I believe it's a moral. I've been over the company's books, and unless something is done, we shall have to shut up.'

The proposition surprised Mr. Tan, and somewhat shocked both Mr. Reefer and Mr. Simpkins; but there was a conscious sense of superiority about the Major which they could not stand.

'A bold move,' said Mr. Tan.

'Rather risky,' observed Mr. Reefer.

'Tempting Providence, I call it,' ventured to interpose the devout Mr. Simpkins.

'It's the only chance of saving the concern, that's what it is,' rejoined the Major; 'and let me tell you, if Gadfly wins—and it's a certainty—I intend that we should start a paper.'

'A paper!' reëchoed the trio; 'a newspaper, do you mean?'—who were not less astounded than if their worthy friend had announced his intention of devoting the surplusage of his income to the task of converting the Zulu Kaffirs to Christianity, or had suggested that they should give up the premises of the C. B. G. C. P. C. as a suitable site for building a church dedicated to the religious welfare of the Arabs and heathens of London. 'You don't mean you want a newspaper, Roarer? Why, there are such a lot of them already.'

'I mean what I say, and what I say I'll have,' was the Major's epigrammatic answer. 'If Gadfly wins the Derby, we'll have the *Gadfly* newspaper; and if you fellows don't like the look-out, you can cut the concern, and I'll buy up your interest.'

Mr. Tan looked at Mr. Reefer, and Mr. Reefer, with a shrug of his shoulders, passed the look on to Mr. Simpkins. 'Suppose we wait till the Derby's over?' said that gentleman.

'Wait as long as you like, only I'm afraid you can't wait here, as I'm off to dress for dinner. Have any sherry and bitters?' And Major Roarer stepped once more into his brougham, and thundering to the coachman 'Home!' was whisked off to his toilet.

'That's a queer start of Roarer's,' generally remarked Messrs. Reefer, Simpkins, and Tan. 'Wonder what he's got hold of now.'

It was a queer start, no doubt. But the idea was not quite so sudden a one as his friends had supposed with the gallant gentleman. The truth was the Major had political aspirations, and he had been assured there was nothing like having a newspaper at one's disposal for crowning these with success. Besides, it was the correct thing in the present day to have something to do either with theatrical or literary interests. The Major had at one time thought of converting the premises of his company into a temple for the celebration of the modern drama. Everybody seemed to have a theatre. There were some of the Major's friends who had both theatres and newspapers at their disposal. There was young Viscount Rattleby, whom it was

mere matter of history had the Folly and Phantasy Theatres on his hands, at least two weekly periodicals, and who was suspected of being the ultimate backer of a certain influential provincial daily.

'All good for trade,' chuckled little Flip, the very small journalist, rubbing his hands. 'Puff, my boy, let us make what we can out of his lordship while he lasts.'

'Yes,' responded Puff, somewhat mournfully; 'but how long will that be?'

Having made up his mind that a seat in Parliament would be an acquisition, Major Roarer determined to have an organ; and in this determination he was strengthened by a certain young friend of his—not, as it happened, either Mr. Flip or Mr. Puff.

It was about a month ago that Major Roarer had met, at as snug a little dinner as could well be desired, held in a private room of the Star and Garter Hotel, on Richmond Hill, a certain young gentleman, Mr. Digby Penn—a monstrously clever fellow and devilish amusing,' the Major's host had described him as being, when he was enumerating the different members of the company beforehand. 'He can do anything, can Digby,' said the gentleman in question, Captain Maloine; 'and he's about the best fun I know.'

Mr. Digby Penn was commencing life, and he intended to make of life a success. He had good connections and influential friends, a small income and large ideas. But the faculties which this young gentleman possessed were eminently such as could be turned to good financial account. By no means averse from the pleasures of society and the table, he could be, when it suited him, a severe student. Idleness was not one of Mr. Penn's vices: he had a considerable capacity for work; and when he did work, it was seldom to no purpose. He had already achieved something that might be developed into a name and reputation in literature; and he was bent upon adopting literature as a career. The Buffs were at that time in office, and Mr. Digby Penn was not one of the least important writers on the great weekly organ of that distinguished party, the *Hybrid*. Digby was decidedly ambitious, and it seemed to him that political and party journalism offered to him the most effective method of gratifying his ambition which he could find. Mr. Penn's enemies declared that his political conscience was a very uncertain and intangible essence; but then this is an assertion which it is very easy to make and very difficult to refute. So Digby went on his own way, and his own way answered. He had been complimented by one or two of the most considerable of Buff statesmen on his journalistic capacity; and it was well known that he was high in favour with Mr. Mather, the head electioneering agent of the Buffs, whose offices were in Guelph-street, and who was reported to have a much stronger hold over the Buff party generally than his chiefs at all liked to think. 'Mr. Penn,' remarked Mr. Mather to our friend,

'we will find a seat for you in Parliament before long. That is your proper arena.' Whereat Mr. Penn would thank Mr. Mather, and not endeavour to contradict the compliment which the observation implied.

Major Roarer was not a gentleman of strong literary interests himself. Nevertheless, at the dinner to which allusion has been made, Mr. Digby Penn's conversation produced a strong impression upon him. Major Roarer informed his newly-made acquaintance of what he was pleased to call his political convictions. They were rather of a negative kind. He hated the Blues, the whole lot of them—'quite intolerable,' 'simply detestable,' were the hostile epithets with which, in lieu of adverse arguments, he proceeded to demolish them. Mr. Digby Penn suggested to the Major, in a tone of slightly inflated compliment, that, entertaining those views, he certainly ought to stand for a borough in the Buff interest.

'Never given my attention too much to politics,' replied the gallant gentleman.

'That is no matter,' was Mr. Penn's rejoinder; 'an ounce of conviction is worth a ton of study. What we'—meaning the Buffs generally—'want is force—moral force—earnestness, confidence, genuine simple honesty, Major Roarer. These are quite as valuable, politically speaking, as any powers of verbal refinement or flourishes of rhetorical skill. If the Buffs are to take their place as the great party of national liberators, it will be less by virtue of the argumentative ability'—here Digby took another glass of champagne—'the mere argumentative ability of its supporters, than their heart-deep faith in the integrity of the cause.'

Mr. Penn paused for a moment. The Major thought he had never heard any person put the whole matter so admirably before.

'Besides,' Digby went on, 'with your special opportunities, Major Roarer'—the Major looked puzzled—'I mean the opportunities which, as the proprietor of a large printing establishment, you must have—you would be an ally of unspeakable value to the Buffs.'

'Don't quite see it,' said the mystified Major.

Mr. Penn then continued to observe, that the political press of England was capable of an infinitely greater and more efficient development than it had yet received; that the most powerful ally which the modern statesman could have was the pen; that considerable dissatisfaction existed among the leaders of the Buff party with the newspaper organs at their disposal; and that it had occurred to him (Digby), in the course of their conversation, that the Major might dispose of the resources at his command in a manner immensely advantageous, not merely to the Buffs in general, but to himself, the Major, in particular.

'How in the world can I do that?' asked the amazed Major. Whereupon Mr. Penn explained to him, that in his capacity of main,

if not the sole, proprietor of the Champion Bill and Gigantic Circular Printing Company, nothing would be easier than to originate a political evening paper, of such a character, and conducted in such a way, that it would give him, the Major, a claim upon the Buff party, which would at once invest him with the highest amount of political importance. 'Then,' concluded Mr. Digby Penn, 'you have but to name your borough, and you will have the seat immediately.'

This suggestion was almost too much for Major Roarer. He scarcely knew whether to take it *au sérieux* or simply as an excellent joke; and while he was pondering the matter, the dinner-party broke up.

'We must talk over this matter again, Mr. Penn,' were Major Roarer's parting words.

III.

The Derby was over, and the winner of the blue ribbon of the turf was no other horse than the celebrated Gadfly. Major Roarer had bought-up the interests of his three co-proprietors, Messrs. Reefer, Simpkins, and Tan, and was completely and solely master of the situation. 'Now, then, for the new paper,' said Major Roarer; 'and what do you think of *Gadfly* for a name, eh, Mr. Penn?'

Piquant Mr. Penn considered it but perhaps a little bit undignified. Still, on farther consideration, as the taste of the day was decidedly in favour of titles such as these, there was no reason why it should not do as well as any other.

Major Roarer and Mr. Digby Penn had had many conversations together since the occasion of the Richmond dinner, and the Major had formed the highest opinion of the tact and abilities of his lately made literary acquaintance. Mr. Muffet, the manager of the C. B. G. C. P. C., had been taken into their confidence. It was highly necessary, he remarked, to secure the services of a thoroughly good and experienced publisher; and such a one Mr. Muffet thought he knew. This gentleman was a certain Mr. Shine, who prided himself on his powers of organisation, and who declared that he had more to do with the newspaper press of England, in one way and another, than any man living. In truth, Mr. Shine's acquaintance with the journalists of London was extensive; and in the course of his interviews with the Major, he favoured him with an infinite series of very personal reminiscences of the members of the staff of many a well-known and triumphantly successful newspaper. Did Mr. Shine think that there was room for such a venture as that of the *Gadfly*? and what did he think its precise platform ought to be? Mr. Shine thought there was no doubt about the question of room; and with his management he rather flattered himself that he could make room. Mr. Shine continued to say, that in these times features were everything. A new daily journal, to be a success, must have some special and distinctive feature of its own.

'We are going to be political,' interrupted the Major.

That of course, remarked the unruffled Mr. Shine, went without saying. But mere politics wouldn't float a newspaper; it was not a 'feature,' and a 'feature' there must be. Now he, the speaker, should suggest that the thing would be to 'work up the sporting and the theatres.' In this way, two very powerful interests would be conciliated; and the *Gadfly*, thus having a special as well as a general circulation, its political influence would necessarily be exactly doubled.

There was no gainsaying these arguments. 'A deuced good idea I call it,' put in the Major, 'eh, Digby?' for the Major was growing quite familiar with Mr. Penn.

'I think so too. First attract the casual reader, and then convert him: that's sound policy,' said Mr. Penn.

Capital, of course, had to be raised. There was some little difficulty about that, but nothing insuperable. The Major was a man of many resources, and he was soon able to raise the requisite funds to float the *Gadfly* at starting. Starting, Mr. Shine impressed upon him, was the only hard thing. There was not the slightest doubt about it, that when the *Gadfly* had once made its appearance, a whole crop of eager backers would soon make themselves known.

'For the matter of that,' put in Mr. Penn, 'the party'—Mr. Penn alluded to the Buffs—'are quite certain to take it up.'

'Think so?' meditatively asked the Major.

'Not the slightest doubt of it, sir,' replied Mr. Shine. 'Mr. Penn is quite right.'

Mr. Digby Penn had consented to be the editor of the *Gadfly*. His salary was not a magnificent one to commence with, but it was to rise; and, as Mr. Shine clearly demonstrated, adducing facts and figures in confusing superabundance to add conviction to his argument, the *Gadfly* was perfectly certain to make the fortune of every one concerned in it.

The *Gadfly* was an accomplished fact. Little dirty urchins rushed wildly up and down the Strand, shouting out the name of Major Roarer's paper. It was thrust into your face at crossings; its advertising placards stared at you in railway carriages. Mr. Shine was in his glory; the Major was full of pride; Mr. Digby Penn carried himself as a man who is performing a work that is to benefit his species. The idea of the experienced publisher had been pretty well followed out. The *Gadfly* had gone heavily in for sporting and for theatres. It was political, in truth—severely political; but a striking degree of prominence was accorded to its theatrical and sporting information.

Mr. Penn had introduced Major Roarer to Mr. Mather, who has been already mentioned in the course of this veracious history, as the head electioneering agent of the Buffs; and Mr. Mather had declared that the Major had done a very public-spirited thing in

starting the *Gadfly*; that the party valued it extremely; and that every one was surprised at the ability and vivacity with which it was conducted.

'I assure you, Major, that Lord Brecon and myself strolled the other night into the Coliseum, and there was scarcely a person in the building who was not reading the *Gadfly*. We were both struck by it, and both of us said simultaneously what a mighty thing it was to have all those people inoculated with sound constitutional doctrines—people whom such doctrines would very likely never reach were it not for the *Gadfly*.'

The Major's eyes glistened with delight. 'That looks healthy,' said that gentleman to his friend and editor on leaving Mr. Mather's presence—'good for my seat and good for the paper; and upon my soul they are both of them matters which require some assistance, for I can tell you, my dear fellow, that it's devilish expensive work the paper. Shall we ask Mather whether the party wouldn't put some money in, just to give it a lift?'

Mr. Penn thought that this would be premature. There was no doubt that the party would ultimately do a great deal both for Major Roarer and for the *Gadfly*. Meanwhile he was establishing a claim upon the party; that was a great thing, impressed Mr. Penn. Only let him increase this claim, and be content for the present to play more or less of a waiting game.

'You must be getting a millionaire, I should think,' remarked one of the Major's friends to him one afternoon at his club, 'with your paper.'

'Precious slowly, then: these newspapers suck up no end of a lot of capital, I can tell you.'

'Strikes me, Roarer,' remarked his candid friend, 'that if you want to make the *Gadfly* the success which I have no doubt it will be, you ought to let it burn its own smoke for a little while—I mean consume its own capital. Cast your bread upon the waters, and all that sort of thing, eh?'

Excellent advice, no doubt, on the part of the Major's friend, but advice which was exactly of the kind that did not dovetail with the Major's preconceived notion to follow. A newspaper, he reasoned, clearly existed for the good of its proprietor; and if the *Gadfly* was not instrumental in increasing the sum of his, Major Roarer's, personal conveniences and comforts, why should the *Gadfly* exist at all? 'Quick returns—that's my motto,' said the Major. Had the Major's tradesmen ventured to make the same remark, they would have been met with the most rigorous reproof which that gentleman could administer.

'What do you think of the *Gadfly*?' the proprietor would inquire of his political acquaintances.

'Uncommonly good; leading articles smart and clever, but, I

should think, a little bit above the heads of a penny public,' was the opinion which the said acquaintances were in the habit of expressing.

'I assure you, Major Roarer,' Mr. Mather would observe, 'you are conferring an immense benefit on the public. Colonel De Bille' (the Colonel was one of the chief heads of the Buffs) 'was only yesterday saying how pleased he was with the paper. You must be realising a considerable income—eh, Major?' dryly wound up Mr. Mather.

'Immense income be d—d!' was the Major's mental and sometimes verbal reply; 'it's as much expense as—as—keeping a stud.'

IV.

The office of the *Gadfly* did not always present a scene of peaceful and perfect harmony.

'E's rather 'igh-'anded is Mr. Penn,' Mr. ——— the manager would observe to the Major; 'and 'e ain't popular enough in 'is ideas. Lor, Major, 'e fires away up in the clouds; and so they all of 'em do.'

The 'they' in question was employed to designate Mr. Penn's literary colleagues.

'It's all very well in proper time, when the paper's regularly established,' continued Mr. ———; 'but it don't do now. We've got a good sporting and a first-rate theatrical connection, and we ought to cultivate it. Eh, Swipes, don't you think so?'

Mr. Swipes, it may be explained, was the prophet of the *Gadfly*, and sole sporting oracle on the establishment. He quite agreed with all Mr. ——— had said: there could be no doubt that more attention should be paid to matters sporting and theatrical. Both Mr. Swipes and Mr. ——— had, it may be mentioned, some little time since arrived at a tolerably clear understanding that it would be impossible for them to tolerate Mr. Digby Penn, with his high airs and his sublime impertinence, any longer.

'I'll speak to Mr. Penn,' said the Major; 'but I must be off now; and I want some money. I'm going to whist, and money I must have.'

Mr. ——— trembled in his shoes. He didn't know what there was, but he would see what could be done. And so, in words that have been already employed in the course of this veracious anecdote, Major Roarer frisked the till of the *Gadfly* once more.

There was no doubt a certain quantity of truth, though tinged with a considerable colouring of malice, in these remarks of Messrs. ——— and Swipes. Mr. Digby Penn could not be said exactly to consult the literary wishes, or accommodate himself to the intellectual cravings, of the not very literary or very intellectual public which the *Gadfly* had contrived to create for itself.

'Educate the plebeian, sir; we must educate him,' said Mr. Eglinton Beaverup, whose occasional services—they were very occa-

sional indeed—Digby had been fortunate enough to secure for the *Gadfly*—the *Cestrum*, as Eglinton called it, who disdained at such times to employ an English word when a Greek or a Latin was as easily procurable. 'Hang it, sir, what more could he want?' Eglinton would continue. 'Only let him read the paper—read *this*, sir,' and the speaker majestically waved his hand over some loose slips of manuscript which he had just completed, and which were in fact the 'copy' of a leading article, 'and I'll undertake to say he'll find it replete with humour, full of erudition, and by no means devoid of epigram.'

Eglinton, it may be stated, prided himself upon being the most epigrammatic writer for the English press.

'Quite so,' answered Digby. 'I only hope you have not given more than six lines of Greek, and *have* given a column.'

'It strikes me,' said Dr. Glib, another of Digby's contributors, talking of Mr. Beaverup's leading article half an hour afterwards in proof,—'it strikes me that the casual reader at the Coliseum Music-hall will find he has his work cut out for him when he takes up the *Gadfly* to-night.'

When Dr. Glib made this remark he expressed, though in other words, precisely the same opinion as that which has been already mentioned as communicated by Mr. — and Mr. Swipes. The casual reader had his work cut out for him; and though the casual reader of a penny paper is willing occasionally to mistake mere mystification for sublimity, he strongly objects to a course of systematically confusing perplexity. These, however, were not considerations which weighed much with either Mr. Eglinton Beaverup, Dr. Glib, or even Mr. Penn himself. The Doctor in particular insisted upon the necessity of writing in what he called an educated style—though with the Doctor education and pedantry were sometimes synonymous terms. Eglinton's politics—and he gave them to the readers of the *Gadfly* in tolerably liberal doses—were of a decidedly feudalistic hue. 'The Doctor' had two specialties—he was great upon all sanitary questions, and upon all matters anent foreign diplomacy. It was curious to hear the specious arguments by which he used to impress Mr. Digby Penn with the necessity of paying great attention to these subjects.

'The age,' Dr. Glib would remark, 'is eminently cosmopolitan. The newspaper which suits the age must be cosmopolitan too. We must cast off the shackles of Bumbledom, and spurn the traces of British vestrymanship. Our public—'

'Quite so,' Mr. Eglinton Beaverup, who, though enamoured of his own, was not fond of the eloquence of his friends, would interpose. 'Talking about publics, it's nearly lunch-time; and you had better send the boy out for some bitter ale and chops, Digby. I suppose the paper's all right?'

'Newspapers, I observe,' remarked Dr. Glib, without waiting for the editorial reply, 'have a curious capacity for editing themselves. For instance, I get a note, hurriedly penned from our friend Digby in the morning, to the effect—"Not in form to-day; pray go down and see to the *Estrum*." Of course I go. The head printer is summoned; and there are no leaders in type, and a leader must be written. I sit down; and there being nothing particular to write about, haunt the outskirts of civilisation, and censure in a column and a half of rhetorical anathema the conduct of the chiefs of some republic somewhere near the Ural Mountains, of whose existence I was utterly unaware a few minutes since, as I am convinced the public at large are till they take up that evening's number of the *Estrum*. In three-quarters of an hour the business is done, and the paper is as good as out. This is the way in which history is written—in which nations are ruined and cabinets unseated.'

The great fault of Dr. Glib's conversation was, that he talked in precisely the same strain as that in which he wrote his leading articles; and these were invariably so conceived and expressed as to be full of what the Doctor's friends called eloquence, and his less well-disposed critics bombast. He had great anecdotal and great quotative powers, had this mercurial and medical gentleman, to say nothing of a genially expansive imagination. To Digby in particular he was as a host. When the contributors of the *Gadfly* were irregular in the delivery of their manuscript, as it is to be regretted they too often were, and the editor of that distinguished paper become almost desperate, the appearance of the Doctor was always a godsend. A hurried glance at the morning journals, the barest gleaning of the scantiest facts, and the Doctor had equipped himself with enough of mental pabulum to produce as much in the way of ephemeral literature as might be wanted. 'Nec mora, nec requies,' would say the Doctor; and, sitting down, proceed to cover slip after slip with his handwriting, till Mr. Digby Penn, who himself had been scarcely inactive, was able, adopting the classical tone of his medical friend, to exclaim, 'Ohe, jam satis!'

It was a pleasant and it was a curious sight to witness the sudden transformation of Digby Penn's editorial table into the hospitable luncheon-board; to note the magic manner in which pamphlets, papers, and the other innumerable articles which appertained to the daily production of the *Gadfly*, were swept aside, and their place taken by plates of succulent chops and tankards of foaming ale. Under Mr. Penn's régime the *Gadfly* luncheons became famous. It was surprising to see the succession of odd coincidences which served to bring together the gentlemen who composed the literary staff—choice, though few—of the *Gadfly* between the hours of one and two. Mr. — and Mr. Swipes had been known to say, that if there were fewer luncheons it would have been better for the

paper; but then neither of these gentlemen was initiated into the mysteries of the genial meal. Dr. Glib would exhaustively settle all difficulties of foreign politics over his first chop, dethrone such objectionable dynasties over his second, and reëstablish matters everywhere on a sound basis of constitutional government over his cheese. The Doctor had quite made up his mind that foreign politics must be the *spécialité* of the *Gadfly*.

'In these days,' Dr. Glib would conclusively ask, 'what is a newspaper to do without a *spécialité*, I should like to know?'

But this eminent physician was far from being the only contributor to the *Gadfly* who was desirous of monopolising the space of that journal with what he termed his *spécialité*. There was Mr. Racket, a noisy Templar, who made his way into the *Gadfly* office on the strength of an old college acquaintance with Mr. Penn, and was objectionably in the habit of disturbing with his over-boisterous mirth the social harmony of the midday luncheons. Mr. Racket thought, of course, that the *Gadfly* should give marked prominence to all topics of legal interest. Then there was a Mr. Miles Madison, a gentleman of strong military instincts, and much given to washed-out witticisms; he would like to see as much stress laid as possible upon the necessity of military reform. Lastly, there was the Hon. Mr. Clarence Fitz Flumley, a patrician doctrinaire, who performed to the *Gadfly* in general a part analogous to that played by the chorus in a Greek play. He was a kind of general critic, who in a patronising manner was obliging enough to tell Mr. Penn what he should and what he should not do; why such a course was injudicious, and why such another course was wise. Mr. Flumley, though, was not himself without what Dr. Glib called a *spécialité*. He had a great idea that the British drama was capable of a much more pure and perfect development than it had yet known; that the stage might be made a far mightier lever than most persons imagined for effecting great movements; and what was above all things wanted was a series of succinct instructions as to the manner in which this was to be done. Dramatic criticism of an entirely original kind ought, Mr. Flumley considered, to be made a great point of in the *Gadfly*.

Lunch, with all these gentlemen for company, was really very good fun; and if Digby occasionally felt himself somewhat distracted by the multiplicity of the conflicting counsels with which his friends and contributors assailed him, he was more than fully compensated by the delight which he reaped in the course of these convivial little gatherings. Occasionally, too, Mr. Quince, the most perfect character actor of the day, would drop in, or some other genial and pleasant soul; and thus it often happened that the afternoon was some little way advanced, and the thirteenth edition—the thirteenth, it may be well to say, was in reality the third—of the *Gadfly* was announced

before the lunchers in the editorial room had separated; and when they did separate, it was with the conviction that the world was out of joint, and that it was the proud mission of the *Gadfly* to put it right.

V.

Unfortunately, however, it seems to be one of the signal dispensations of Providence that enterprises undertaken in this spirit of catholic reform are generally doomed to be failures. If the world is out of joint, the world likes to remain so; it certainly resists most strongly being put right through any newspaper medium. This fact Major Roarer, in his capacity of proprietor, very soon discovered.

The Hon. Mr. Flumley did, as has been already intimated, the dramatic criticisms for the *Gadfly*. In the course of one of these compositions he had ventured to remark, that it was somewhat of an anachronism for an actor in a drama, the time of which was fixed for the eighteenth century, to appear in the ordinary costume of a gentleman of the present day. Had Mr. Flumley been wiser, he would not have said this; for every person in the slightest degree acquainted with theatrical matters knows that an observation of this kind is an aggravated species of libel. Consequently one fine morning, as Mr. Penn was seated at his desk in the *Gadfly* office, preparing his 'leader' for that day's issue, he received a letter from the solicitor of the grossly outraged *histrion* in question, telling him to retract and apologise for the monstrous slander that had been propagated in the *Gadfly* columns, or else be prepared to face the pains and penalties of an action for libel. Strange to say, the judgment of Mr. Digby Penn was also at fault, and he declined the suggested apology. He had accepted the alternative: the action for libel was commenced, and an impartial jury of his countrymen decided in favour of the insulted actor. Major Roarer had to pay damages twenty pounds, and costs.

Some little time afterwards Mr. Digby Penn, in commenting on the case of an elderly matron who was found hopelessly intoxicated on the floor of an omnibus, went so far as to designate in print the lady thus discovered in this compromising predicament as a 'tippling female.' Libel again: horribly iniquitous and gratuitous libel. Due course a letter from the solicitor of the feminine Silenus, demanding abject immediate apology, or—an action for libel. His client—a lady of the highest respectability, position, and reputation—drunk? A likely sort of thing! what next, indeed! Madam had been seized with a fainting-fit—the consequence of exhaustion, nothing but pure exhaustion. She had started in the morning from Shepherd's-bush to Whitechapel, there to alleviate by a small dole the want and sickness of a peccant son; and returning after a long fast, when seized with a swoon, she was called drunk! A pretty

state of things, to be sure! On this occasion Digby determined to consult his proprietor as to what was to be done. The Major read all the documents connected with the matter, and when he had completed their perusal he grunted:

'Quite right, Digby,' he said; 'the old cat was as drunk as a fly. No apology for us.'

'Then, Major,' prudently observed Digby, 'you'll take all responsibility upon yourself?'

'Of course I will,' and the Major rushed downstairs into his brougham which was waiting at the door.

The British jury, however, did not take quite the same view as the Major. The license of the press must be put down. The evidence proved conclusively that Mrs. Bibulus was an habitually sober personage. They considered the libel contained in the paragraph of the *Gadfly* to be of the grossest and most unprovoked order. Once more, therefore, the gallant proprietor of the journal was met with a verdict of damages twenty pounds, and costs to pay.

These little incidents did not add to the smoothness of routine generally at the *Gadfly* office. There were other matters, too, which were unfavourable. The Major had had an unusually ill run at whist lately. His bets had not turned out well; and the 'good things' on which Mr. Swipes had put him had shown themselves to be very especially vile. Not to put too fine a point upon it, money became rather more than tight in the *Gadfly* office; and Mr. Digby Penn's contributors, excellent fellows though they were, when they found that even 'payments on account' were not forthcoming, began to turn restive. There were still the luncheons, but they had lost much of their old buoyancy. Mr. Madison, whose demands for money were of the most pressing nature, was in the habit of humorously expatiating upon the inaccessibility of Mr. —, who acted in the capacity of cashier.

'Never saw such a thing,' that gentleman would say; 'never can get hold of the man; or if one does, he's off in a minute. Compared with — the eel is an adhesive animal.'

'I say, Digby,' ejaculated the Major to the editor one day, 'I don't think the *Gadfly* is doing what it ought. They say it isn't popular enough.'

'I say, Major,' responded Digby, who was, to tell the plain truth, getting somewhat nettled on the score of proprietorial ingratitude, 'if you don't look out, there will be no *Gadfly* in a little time to be popular or unpopular. I had Smiffins up here yesterday, telling me the men would not print, because their wages were unpaid; and I gave him a cheque myself. And remember, too, men won't write for ever without receiving their payments. On my word you must find funds.'

'And how the devil do you suppose I'm going to do that?' coolly asked the Major. 'Here, your libel actions have cost me a mint; and I've had the vilest luck lately I ever knew. On my soul and honour I don't know what's to become of me. I must be off now, though.'

'I shall see you to-morrow?' asked Digby.

'I'm by no means so certain of that,' was the answer; 'this cursed blue producer,' and here the insolvent officer produced from his pocket a bundle of writs, 'may send me to Ostend. Upon my honour I'm getting sick of the sight of blue paper.'

And so saying the Major left the room.

In the course of the afternoon Digby received at his club a note from Major Roarer. Something very like a *fiasco* had arrived. He (Major Roarer) could do nothing; and without money the printers would not work. He had had such a run of luck against him, that he was almost driven to earth. Couldn't Digby go down and see Mr. Mather? Wouldn't 'the party' take up the paper?

And this on the 13th of August, when every one was in Scotland; and Mr. Mather, he knew, was shooting in Yorkshire.

'Some person waiting to see you, sir,' said a waiter, while Digby was vacantly gazing up Pall-mall out of the window.

He went out: it was none other than Mr. —. Matters, so said this gentleman, were not merely critical, but disastrous. Unless Mr. Penn would lend him his cheque, his *crossed* cheque, Mr. — significantly said, they would scarcely even be able to print the remainder of that evening's edition. That Digby should decline to do this was not wonderful.

'Then,' said Mr. —, 'the paper must be stopped.'

It was universally agreed that the announcement of the sudden stoppage of the *Gadfly*, 'soon to reappear incorporated in a new and influential paper, the *Comet*,' was a masterly performance on Digby's part. Meanwhile the promise has not yet been redeemed, and the *Comet* has not yet shot across the horizon of literary London.

As for the Major he did go to Ostend. It is stated by some that he is there still. But the generally received opinion is, that he has long since returned to London, and is once more careering through the streets of London in his brougham, and in the plenitude of his pristine splendour. As for Mr. Digby Penn, the editorial experience which he had with the *Gadfly* has been sufficient, and he no longer advises ambitious but impecunious gentlemen to originate newspapers.

'The market,' says Digby, 'is overstocked already.'

And Digby's remark contains whatever of moral this sketch may be considered to furnish.

THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

CHAPTER XXIV. LORD AND LADY PENNYROYAL AND MR. SONDERLING.

'Mr. and Mrs. Rubrick!' said Mr. Podager; and then in a little while, in half a minute, he called out 'Miss Markham!' as the incumbent and his wife and the dear old maid arrived. Then there was a short pause, during which most of the visitors made their appearance; and Lady Carlton looked anxious, as though waiting for an event. Then came Mr. Podager to the front again, still more stately and still more tardy, and announced, 'Lord and Lady Pennyroyal!'

Let us take Lady Pennyroyal first. She was in every respect a most delightful woman. Delightful is all very well; but tell us this minute how old she was. That is the first question which even little children now ask about ladies, 'How old is she?' followed rapidly by another, 'Is she good-looking?' Youth and looks now rule the world more completely with a rod of iron than in any other age, and in a little while there will be no room left in this age of admiration for persons of either sex who are unfortunately over fifty. Lady Pennyroyal was what some of you would call awfully old; we call her a good age. If you looked her out in the *Peerage*, you would see that she was sixty-five. You can take no interest, you young ones, in a lady of that age; you don't call it 'good' at all. Tastes differ, and we do take an interest in Lady Pennyroyal, whom we declare still to be a most fascinating woman; and we only hope any of you young people of her sex will be half as fascinating when you are her age, if you live so long, which is not likely, if you let your emotions and feelings and sensations run away with you down the hill of life as fast as some of you are already going, when you are scarcely out of your teens. Lady Pennyroyal had been, and still was, a very beautiful woman. She was tall, and upright as a dart; her figure was still beautiful, her eyes were gray and full, her features straight, her brow noble, and her mouth firm and yet soft. They said she had gone through many sorrows. Lord Pennyroyal had not been her first love, though he had been her last. That root of bitterness was still there, though it had not found in her noble heart any soil in which to spring up into worse fruit. Then

her children had died, several of them, one after another, just as they were growing up. In the vault at Farthinghoe Castle were ever so many little Lady Marjorams, all cut off just as they came into flower. There they lay, wasting all their sweetness among the bones of their forefathers and foremothers. One, two, three, four, five, six coffins of sons and daughters of Lady Pennyroyal might be counted in that vault. Poor things! They were buried as well as any undertaker could do it. There were elm coffins, and lead coffins, and mahogany coffins, and silver plates, and black velvet, and short touching inscriptions. Everything was done to make them comfortable in the grave; yet what did it all come to? There they lay, side by side, born into the world and then snatched away from it, having just taken a peep at life, as it were, through a chink or cranny, and then bidden to come away and leave earth and its pomps and vanities, and to lie beneath it, lapped in lead, in the hope of a blessed resurrection. It was sad to think on; and as Lady Pennyroyal thought of it, and of those she had lost, she grew sadder and sadder. But she did not grow sour; grief chastened and mellowed her feelings, and, if anything, she was more sympathetic after the loss of her children, and more ready to help all around her, than when she still had her quiver full. 'I have still three left,' she said; but they were all sons, and the youngest was now grown up. The eldest, Lord Rosemary, had been in the Guards; but he had sold out, and now he was nothing but his father's heir. The two other Honourable Mr. Marjorams were still in the army; one sweltering in India, and the other alternately sweltering and shivering in Canada. So that, except for Lord Rosemary, Lady Pennyroyal had small comfort of her children. This description must suffice for her at present. All we can say is, if you do not like her it must be all our fault, for we mean you all to like her very much.

Lord Pennyroyal was a tall thin man, not very good-looking, with something of the rueful family features of the Marjorams; but at the same time he was aristocratic, and when you looked at him, you knew you had a born nobleman before you. He was not very clever or very brilliant; but every now and then he said a good thing, and it came out in a way that showed if he would only take the trouble he could say a deal more of the same sort. But in general he was as parsimonious in bringing out the treasures of his mind as he was saving in his worldly goods; for you must know that Lord Pennyroyal's worst fault was, that he was very much of a miser. It wasn't at all that he would not spend large sums; for if there was an estate to be got which rounded off his property, he bought it without a pang; nor was he illiberal or uncharitable, when anything was to be done either liberally or charitably on a grand scale. He would give 1000*l.* to this hospital, and 1500*l.* to that institution, cheerfully. It was not in great things, but in little things, that he

showed his stinginess; and as there are, happily, more little than great things in life, people were always hearing of his meanness in trifles, and forgetting how truly generous he had often been on great occasions. He would walk a mile to save sixpence, even when the rain was pouring, and the London mud and rain together were spoiling his hat and his clothing to the tune at least of ten shillings. His income was enormous. What do we mean by 'enormous'? says a reader who will not let us deal in extravagant expressions. Well, we mean by 'enormous' more than 100,000*l.* a year—that we call 'enormous.' But, in truth, Lord Pennyroyal's income no one can tell. He is still alive, and likely to live; and as he has had 100,000*l.* a year ever since he was born, is now seventy, and has been saving all his life, there is no knowing what he may be worth. We only hope he will remember us, and as many of our readers as deserve it, in his will, and that personally and particularly, not generally, by building us and all the world an asylum for idiots or a smallpox hospital, but leaving us each several thousand pounds to our sole and separate use. But it is too tempting to speculate on what Lord Pennyroyal may do with his money. There he was, in the drawing-room at High Beech, immensely wealthy, yet bearing on him the leprosy of stinginess.

The flutter caused by the coming of the Pennyroyals had scarcely subsided when there was another arrival. Mr. Podager stalked in again, and called, 'Mr. Sonderling!'

Mr. Sonderling was a very strange-looking man. He was tall and slim. He was a German, you know, and wore spectacles. Most English people think all Germans wear spectacles; they even believe Germans are born with them, as some babes with a caul, just in the same way as they think all the Germans in the City are sugar-bakers, and come from Hamburg. Mrs. Marjoram was plainly of this opinion; for when she was told Mr. Sonderling was a German, she said, 'I thought so—he wears spectacles.' But Mr. Sonderling had other peculiarities—he had red hair, and his hair stood out like shock-headed Peter's in the story-book; and it was so staring and fluffy and unmanageable, either by brush or comb, that the old women of High Beech would have said there was a dash of *plica Polonica* in the Sonderling family; only no woman, young or old, in High Beech had ever heard of *plica Polonica*, or what that fearful hair disease meant. In general appearance, Mr. Sonderling was very like a red Pole, or Socrates. Those of you who know what red Poles look like, will know how Mr. Sonderling looked; and those who know how Socrates looked, will also know what Mr. Sonderling was like. If any of you are so unfortunate as neither to know how red Poles look, nor how Socrates looked, we are afraid it can't be helped. We have done all we can for you. Mr. Sonderling had great goggle staring eyes, and one eye was what may be

called a swivel eye—it was bigger and more goggle than the other, and stood farther out from the socket. It was an eye by aid of which a man might almost see behind his back. It would not have been safe to put a pigtail on Mr. Sonderling, or to make a face at him behind his back. If any one took such liberties, Mr. Sonderling would have been sure to turn round and catch the culprit in the act. His nose was a decided snub—quite as snubby as the nose of Socrates, which you may see at the Crystal Palace in his bust; and he had thick blubber lips. When he opened his mouth, he showed more gums than teeth; you saw his gums first, and his teeth afterwards. He had a great jaw, and his teeth were set in it far apart, as though they were not his own, but had been transplanted from the mouth of some one else. For the rest, they were not bad teeth; but when one looked at them, a second thought arose that some of his back teeth had slipped in front, so big and square and solid they looked.

Altogether, Mr. Sonderling was no beauty, nor was Socrates; but he had a broad massive brow, and a look of rare intelligence. When he smiled, his whole countenance was lighted up, and you felt, after all, that you could love him and admire him, though he was so ugly.

No one exactly knew Mr. Sonderling's age; sometimes he looked as old as the hills, sometimes not more than five-and-thirty. From what we know, we have reason to believe that he was not more than that age.

Though he was ugly, Mr. Sonderling was not at all awkward. His bow was almost equal to Count Pantouffles', and his manners were quite as good as those of Lord Pennyroyal, who was proverbially good-mannered. It is a good thing for a very ugly man to be polite and well-bred; for somehow or other it is the curse of ugliness that most people fancy frights must be ill at ease, as though they felt they had no business to show themselves in society with such hideous faces; and so it was a great relief to all the strangers present when they saw that Mr. Sonderling was exquisitely polite, and could hold his own, as the saying is, in any company.

'We are all here,' said Sir Thomas Carlton, as soon as Mr. Sonderling was announced. 'Let us have dinner.'

There was so little time between Mr. Sonderling's arrival and the announcement of dinner, that no one had an opportunity of seeing what we saw. As soon as Mr. Sonderling saw the fair Amicia he gave a little start. He did not faint, as she did, at the mere mention of his name in the morning; he only hung out a little flag of emotion or surprise, and then pulled it in again. As for Amicia, she made no sign or signal whatever. To look at her, one would have thought she had never heard the name 'Sonderling,' much less swooned away at its sound.

'Dinner is served, my lady,' said Mr. Podager; and the arduous duty of seating nineteen people at dinner began. The day before the table had been oblong, now it was round, and it is much easier to seat people at a round than a square table. It is the old story of the round holes and the square people with a square table, and the round people with round holes in a round one. Lady Carlton went off last with Lord Pennyroyal; but before the others went she had paired her birds for the little matrimony of dinner; so they all streamed out before her in order of precedence. First went Lady Pennyroyal with Sir Thomas Carlton, then came Amicia with Count Pantouffles, who led her up and placed her next to Sir Thomas; so that, to Florry's infinite delight, she saw her, when she took her place, safely seated next papa, with the impenetrable Count to act as a nonconductor between her and the outer world. Next came Mrs. Rubrick with Mr. Beeswing; Mrs. Rubrick was a baronet's daughter. Then came Mrs. Marjoram with Mr. Rubrick; then Mrs. Barker with Mr. Sonderling; then Miss Markham with Colonel Barker; then Florry—what fun for Florry!—with Harry Fortescue; then Alice with Edward; and, last of all, Mr. Marjoram walked in alone. For him there was no lady. Lady Carlton, if she had dared, would have given him again to Miss Markham; but she feared a scene with Mrs. Marjoram, and so Mr. Marjoram walked in alone.

When they had all settled into their places and grace was over, Florry and Alice found themselves, to their great joy, well away from Lady Sweetapple in the middle of the round, and, if anything, rather nearer to their mother's than to their father's end of the table. We call it 'end,' but we very well know that a round table has no end, or better still, is all ends and points. Without quibbling over words, it is enough to say that Florry and Alice were as far off Lady Sweetapple as possible, and that made them very happy—Florry for her own, and Alice for Florry's sake. It so happened that Mr. Sonderling sat on the other side of Florry, nearer to Sir Thomas; Alice and Edward were on the other side of the table, opposite to Harry Fortescue and Florry. Where the rest sat does not much matter.

Lady Pennyroyal was a very good converser. She talked like one of the old school. She had no daughters to reform her language, after the new model of 'awfully' and 'jolly,' and that set of phrases; but whatever she said was worth listening to, and she had that rare gift of always drawing out from those with whom she talked the line of conversation which best suited them. With her, conversation was a kind of divination. She struck at once upon the hidden spring with her rod, and made it gush out and flow. Nor was Sir Thomas, when thus incited, a bad talker. No wonder, then, that the conversation between him and Lady Pennyroyal was continuous and lively. For the time, they were so wrapped up in one another that Sir Thomas had no time to say anything to Lady Sweetapple, save the

merest commonplaces. What she got were merely those crumbs of conversation which fell from the rich man's table. It was humiliating to Amicia to be treated like a dog, but so it was. Of course there was a banquet spread for her too, and she might have partaken of it if she chose. She might have feasted on the flow of Count Pantouffles' soul; but, as we well know, Count Pantouffles had no soul. On the whole, his platitudes were more nauseous than the crumbs of comfort which came from Sir Thomas. So there Amicia sat the dinner through, thinking of Edith Price, of Florry Carlton, and, we must add it, of Mr. Sonderling.

At the other end of the table Lord Pennyroyal talked the regulation talk of set dinners with Lady Carlton. He spoke of the weather and the grass, and how there would not be half a load of hay to the acre all over the Farthinghoe estate, unless they had rain soon. It was even worse down in Nottinghamshire at Rosemary Manor. His farmers there said they had not had one drop of rain all through April. Somehow or other the seasons were quite changed since he was a boy. Then it always rained at the right time; but now it never rained except in November, and then ten inches fell all at once when rain was least wanted. He was afraid the springs would begin to fail, and was much supported in his belief when Lady Carlton informed him that the spring at Bubnall Hill, which had never ceased running in a full stream since the memory of man, was quite dwindling away, and was lost in the sand before it had flowed a hundred yards.

'It is heartbreaking,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'If hay keeps up—it is now nine pounds a ton—I shall sell all mine, and make Rosemary sell his hunters at Tattersall's. In these hard times no one can afford to hunt.'

Then he turned to the wheat. 'Yes, the wheats looked pretty well,' when Lady Carlton remarked that a dry season was generally a good corn year. He was so doleful about the price of hay, she was forced to say this to comfort him. 'Yes, wheats looked pretty well as yet; but who could tell if the heat would not shrivel up the ears and make it thresh out badly, and what was the good of wheat when the country was flooded with foreign grain?'

Of course, Lord Pennyroyal was a Tory—the house of Marjoram had ever been Tory. They came in with the Conquest; they were as good as the Plantagenets; their crest was a sprig of sweet marjoram. They had escaped extinction in the Barons' wars, and in the French and Scotch wars, and in those of the Roses. Henry VII. fined, but could not ruin them. They had been Barons Rosemary by writ for centuries. In Henry VIII.'s time they became Earls of Pennyroyal by patent, receiving a large slice of abbey lands. They had stood by King Charles at Marston Moor, and been fined again. Since then they had been a saving family. They had done

nothing but turn their money over as quickly as they could; and here was the Earl of Pennyroyal, a niggard, but still a Tory; and that was why he looked upon Protection to British Industry in the light of a palladium, and on Cobden as a dangerous monster, with his false principles, as Lord Pennyroyal called them, of Free Trade. That was why he was so sore on that question of foreign corn. If he could have had his way, he would have had Free Trade in nothing, not even in Ostend rabbits; and no doubt he would have rejoiced in his heart at the Budget of 1871, so far as the match-tax was concerned, though, no doubt, he hates the increased income-tax, and groans in spirit when he reckons—and you may be sure he has reckoned it to a penny—how much of his accumulated savings will have to be paid by Rosemary in succession duty whenever, by what is called 'the devolution of property,' the Pennyroyal estates pass to the next heir to the title.

Then, as to household expenses. Had Lady Carlton ever considered how fearfully they had increased of late years? He was not at all surprised that young men would not marry nowadays, the expense was so ruinous. Lady Pennyroyal was always wanting Rosemary to marry, but he always said he couldn't afford it. Fifty years ago, masters and mistresses were content with so little, and servants were so respectful, and never asked for rises in their wages. And now young people must have horses and carriages, and town-houses and country-houses, and go to the sea, and rent a moor in Scotland, and fishing in Norway, and set off travelling in Germany and Italy and Switzerland. It was enough to drive fathers and mothers mad. So he went on, inveighing against the extravagance of the age, as if the unhappy Rosemary had ever done one of those things, his only expense being his stud of hunters, which his father now proposed to put down, and which he really was obliged to keep for decency's sake. As for his marrying, it was also well-known that Rosemary, who was now near forty, had several times been on the point of proposing to charming girls, only he was afraid to do it, as Lord Pennyroyal said he could not afford him a separate establishment. Those very hunters were not even regularly paid for by Lord Pennyroyal. He thought it a very proper thing for his heir to hunt in Leicestershire, and to have a little house at Melton, only he disliked paying for those things, and, in fact, he never paid till his son sent him in what he called 'a facer,' that is, every five or six years an account of his debts, which were none of them disgraceful, and far below what many an heir of a tenth of Lord Pennyroyal's property might have contracted. And this account was usually accompanied by a respectful letter to his father, requesting pecuniary help. Nor, we hope, will our readers think it extraordinary when we tell them that, somehow or other, Lady Pennyroyal always knew of these periodical statements, and was ever ready to support Rosemary's

petition to his father. The result was, there was a domestic altercation, in which Lady Pennyroyal might have been heard, had there been any listeners, observing, 'Well, Rosemary'—she always called him Rosemary, because he had been only Rosemary when she married him—'well, Rosemary, you must admit that our son has some expectations, and ought to live up to them.' Then, driven into a corner, Lord Pennyroyal would retire to his study, unlock an iron safe, drag out a cheque-book with a spasmodic effort, as though he were tearing away his heart-strings, and finally, with his rueful countenance rendered still more rueful by the bitter deed, sign a cheque for 10,000*l.*, and so settle, once for all, an account which ought to have been paid at the rate of 3,000*l.* a year as an allowance, and which, even in a lump, was a mere flea-bite to his balance at his bankers.

The conversation, therefore, of Lord Pennyroyal at that dinner on the 2d of June was anything but cheerful. It was more like the croaking of a raven from a hollow tree in some parts of England, if any are left in which there are ravens to croak.

Florry Carlton talked to Harry, and Harry to Florry; and Edward talked to Alice, and Alice to Edward. A never-ending current of nothings passed between them, so sweet to lovers, or would-be lovers, and so uninteresting to every one else. What fun it had been under the oak! How strange the gipsy was! How queer Colonel Barker looked, and Mrs. Barker, floundering about in the rain as sleek and shining as seals! How queer Mr. Marjoram looked on horseback! When in the world had he ridden last? 'When you come back to town, shall you ride at one in the Row?' 'May I ride with you?' 'Certainly, if you like. Alice and I always ride. Why don't you ride always?' 'Because I can't afford it.' 'That's like Lord Rosemary's marriage, always to be, and never coming off, because he can't afford it.' 'How sad Lord Pennyroyal looks! How I wish I were his heir!' said Harry. 'I'm sure I don't,' said Florry; 'he's no happier with all that money.' 'How do you like the looks of Mr. Sonderling?' said Edward to Alice. 'Very much,' said Alice; 'when he smiles I think he's quite handsome. There! just see how his face lights up as he speaks to Florry.' And so on for ever and ever, or till the ladies rose.

As for Miss Markham and Colonel Barker, Mrs. Barker might just as well have been jealous of her husband as Mrs. Marjoram of hers the night before. No one could have been more attentive to the dear little old maid than the gallant Colonel. For her sake he recounted his Indian experiences; told of his arrival in India, his marriage with Mrs. Barker, the best woman in the world; of his campaign in Beloochistan, where the Fire-eaters made their famous march of forty miles a day across the Runn of Cutch; of the Sikh wars; of the siege of Mooltan; of the Bombay Ducks, that cele-

brated European regiment, of whom every man could drink a quart of rum a day and fight a pitched battle every day, if need were. Nay, he would even have told her of the Ram Chowdah and his hill fort; only, just as he was going to begin, the ladies rose, and the Colonel was literally left alone in his glory.

In fact, at that dinner, things on the whole were smooth, though not very brilliant. There seemed to be no heart-burnings on the surface, though Amicia had hers in her bosom, and so had others of the party. The nearest approach to actual hostilities and altercation arose between Mrs. Marjoram and Mr. Rubrick; and really it was inexcusable in Lady Carlton to have paired them together.

'I thought as they were both religious,' said Lady Carlton to Florry, after dinner, in justification, 'they would agree very well together.'

Florry did not say anything to this, and accepted the justification, but we cannot and will not. Of all people in the world, religious people are least likely to agree with one another, except they are of the same religion, and more, of the same sect in it. Put a Wesleyan and a Church of England man, a Scotch Episcopalian and a Free Kirker together, shut them up in a room for an hour, or even have them to dinner, and see if they will agree. They do not agree because they are religious, and that is, in fact, the very reason why they fight like cat and dog.

CHAPTER XXV.

FLORRY TRIES TO GUESS AT SOMETHING.

BUT what was the question which Mr. Sonderling put to Florry, which led to the conversation in which his face brightened up? After he had sounded the depths of Mrs. Barker's soul, and found that, to him, it was as a well without water—for, apart from her honest downright love for her husband, there was not much in Mrs. Barker—Mr. Sonderling, whose thoughts were set on ascertaining one point, turned to Florry, and said in the politest way,

'May I ask, Miss Carlton, how long have you known Lady Sweetapple?'

'Not long enough to like her,' burst out Florry, in her impetuous way; 'and more than that, I think the longer I knew her the less I should like her.'

This was the answer which made Mr. Sonderling smile so brightly. Florry's fire struck light in his stony heart, and light flashed in his face.

'I, too,' he said, in his half-German English, 'I, too, am not now an admirer of Lady Sweetapple.'

It was now Florry's turn to smile radiantly. She felt as if she had found a friend, merely because her next neighbour agreed with her in disliking her enemy; but she wished to know more, and went on,

'May I ask, Mr. Sonderling, how long you have known Lady Sweetapple?'

'Too long to like her,' was the answer.

'Yes, but how long?' asked Florry, getting impatient, and leaving Harry high and dry in his conversation in her eagerness to know something of her rival's early life.

'Before she was Lady Sweetapple—before she was what she is now,' said the German; and then he heaved a sigh which came from his very heart.

We know it is very like the Sorrows of Werther to sigh and feel. We have nearly stamped out sighs and feeling in England, and so it surprises us when an honest German fetches up a romantic sigh from the depths of his being. The effect is much the same as if Truth were all at once to emerge from the bottom of her well, and to show herself for an hour or two in London society.

'Very ridiculous in a great grown man, I don't know how old, to heave such a sigh as that,' thought Harry, who did not at all like being eclipsed by Mr. Sonderling.

'Is there anything the matter, Mr. Sonderling?' asked Florry, who thought that perhaps he had eaten something which had disagreed with him. So like English people; if a man has a headache, they put it down at once to his liver!

'Ah! no!' said Mr. Sonderling; 'Miss Carlton, I reflect.'

'What about?' asked Florry, wondering if reflection always led to sighing in Germany.

'About many things,' said Mr. Sonderling; 'about a man and woman, and nature and art, but most about Lady Sweetapple; and when I reflect on what she used to be and what she is, it makes me sad, and sigh.'

'But what was she before she was what she now is?' said Florry very illogically. She meant, of course, to ask what Lady Sweetapple's name was before she was married, and what her position in life was; in fact, she wanted to know all about her.

'She was a bright and lively thing—a butterfly, a humming-bird, a bird of paradise!' said the German poetically and rather wildly.

'Why, that's what she is now,' said Florry spitefully. 'I am sure, to look at her, you would think she was a butterfly and a bird of paradise and a shining beetle all rolled in one. Don't you understand, I want to know her name?'

'Her name?' said the German most provokingly, 'what does that matter? Your great poet has said, "What's in a name—?"'

'O,' said Florry, 'pray spare me the rest of the quotation; it is so stale.'

'I did think,' said the German, 'that great thoughts were always fresh.'

'So they are,' said Florry; 'but we are not speaking of great thoughts, but of Lady Sweetapple. I want to know what her name was when you first knew her.'

'I do think mit Shakespeare,' said Mr. Sonderling, getting energetic and ungrammatical at once, 'that the name is nothing. *Sauerkraut oder Rosen*, kail or roses, would be all the same if their names were vexeled.'

'Vexeled?' said Florry, though she did know German, 'what does "vexeled" mean?'

'O, I stand under,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'I go mit you. Vexel is just what you call change. I say kail and roses would still be kail and roses, if you called kail rose and rose kail.'

'That's all very well,' said Florry, 'but after all it's only coming back to Shakespeare. What I wanted to know was Lady Sweetapple's former name.'

Here you will all ask why hadn't Florry looked Amicia out in Dod's *Peerage*, and read her maiden name? How silly you are! Of course she had looked, but all she could find was, 'Amicia Lady Sweetapple, baronet's widow, daughter of ———, Esq., married Sir John Sweetapple,' &c. It was just those two tantalising blanks that Florry wanted to fill up, and here this ideal German, though he knew them, would not tell her.

'If you know the name,' said Florry pettishly, 'why can't you say it, Mr. Sonderling?'

'I would say him with much satisfaction,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'but I have not the organ to utter it.'

'Is it a very long name?' asked Florry.

'No, not at all. It is not like Lomonosoff or Rasumoffski, or Bockum-Dolff, or any of the Russian or Prussian names; but for all that, I can't pronounce it.'

'Can't you spell it?' said Florry, getting quite cross, as she saw Lady Carlton gathering up her gloves as a signal of departure.

'Ah! alas!' said Mr. Sonderling, 'it does me woe, but I cannot; I am not utteranceable.'

'Utteranceable?' said Florry, 'what in the world is that? Does it mean mad?'

'Not so,' said Mr. Sonderling; 'it means that I cannot frame the bookstaves—the mouth and throat organs fail me.'

Here Lady Carlton rose and carried off her ladies, and Florry was hurried off with the rest, without having discovered the German's Shibboleth, because, like those tribes of the Jews, 'he could not frame his lips to pronounce it.'

'If that's like sitting next an intellectual German,' said Florry to Alice, 'I am sure I would sooner sit next to Harry than all the enlightened Germans in the world.'

When the ladies went away, the men closed up. Sir Thomas Carlton went down to Lord Pennyroyal, or Lord Pennyroyal drew up to him. There was a general shrinking in the circle, and the result was that half the seats of that Table Round were left unfilled. The claret went round, and sherry for those who never drank red wine. There was a great deal of general conversation of the Pennyroyal character, but scarce a word could either Harry or Edward get out of Mr. Sonderling; for that gentleman retired into his inner consciousness, just as far as a snail into its shell, and there was no drawing him out of it. Compared with him, Count Pantouffles was positively sprightly; and when we have said that, you may fancy how dull the German was.

Lord Pennyroyal, with all his nearness, had very good faults as we have said, and he was not one of those snobs who cut their poor cousins because, a generation back, they had taken to trade, and not in the next become merchant princes. Mr. Marjoram, for instance, was in a transition state: he had not quite shaken off the tail of the aristocracy, but was still not quite a frog and a merchant. He did very well in the City in the business in which the Honourable Mr. Marjoram, his father, had failed; but he was not yet a great authority on 'Change, like Sir Thomas Carlton, and he would not have dared to bring out the Emperor of Timbuctoo's Loan all to himself. He was ready to have a slice of it, but the whole would have been too much for his mercantile digestion. He would not have known how to place it. So, too, he was a member of Lloyd's and an underwriter of ships. He was always very unhappy when there was a gale, and used to come home like Antonio in the *Merchant of Venice*, lamenting the ships cast away, and making himself miserable lest the good ship Enchantress, or Mermaid, or Rosemary should not return safe to port. Then it was, as the inferior beasts always attack those of their own kind when they are weak and sick, that Mrs. Marjoram raged in full force against her husband, and he used often to say that the equinoxes and Mrs. Marjoram combined were enough to drive a man out of his wits.

But, as we have said, Lord Pennyroyal was no snob. He was always gracious to Mr. Marjoram, and if he could have had his own way, he would have put his third son into his cousin's house, to learn commerce in the City. But there were some things in which even Lord Pennyroyal could not have his way. Lady Pennyroyal could not bear that her son should sit on a high desk, and only see the light of day in some back yard in Leadenhall-street from a reflector. She set her face against the City project, and the end was that the Honourable Percy Marjoram went into the Rifle Brigade. He too,

she thought, might be said 'to have some expectations,' and so he should not slave out his life in business.

On this 2d of June Mr. Marjoram drew up to his cousin much in the same way as he had stood under King Edward's Oak the day before—with the feeling that, under the shade of the head of the house of Marjoram, none of its offshoots could feel otherwise than happy.

'It's a long time since I have seen you, Marjoram,' said the Earl. 'What have you been doing?'

'Not much,' said Mr. Marjoram. 'Business is very dull. Nothing doing, and money a perfect drug.'

'What do you think of this new Timbuctoo Loan? Is it likely to be a good investment?'

'It's a good thing to sell at a premium, if you get the scrip at par,' said Mr. Marjoram with a chuckle; 'but as for investment, we know too little of the resources of Timbuctoo to be quite sure that its stock will ever be a security in which trustees will be allowed to invest by the Lord Chancellor.'

'What's the rate of interest?' asked Lord Pennyroyal.

'The rate of interest? Let me see,' said Mr. Marjoram, doing a little sum in his head. 'Issued at 75 for every 100*l.* at 6 per cent. Yes, I should say it was very good interest, if the security be good.'

'Well, but,' said Lord Pennyroyal, not at all convinced, 'I always thought high interest meant bad security.'

'True,' said Mr. Marjoram; 'for a man of your means, who does not wish to increase his income, there's nothing like the 3 per cents. They will last for ever.'

'But I do want to increase my income,' said Lord Pennyroyal hastily. 'Who can tell what may happen in these revolutionary days? In times like these, every peer of the realm ought to have at least 100,000*l.* at his banker's.'

'I should like to be the banker of a hundred such peers,' said Sir Thomas Carlton, who could not bear to hear Lord Pennyroyal and Mr. Marjoram prosing on at this rate.

'Yes; but I should like to have some interest for my money,' said Lord Pennyroyal sharply. 'I should not like to let 100,000*l.* be idle.'

'O,' said Sir Thomas, 'I thought you meant that sum to be at call. In that case you would not expect to get interest for it.'

'Yes, I should,' said Lord Pennyroyal very positively.

'Then I am afraid you would get no banker to open the account. It would not be worth his while. Besides, if you expect to get interest on your balance, don't you see, in self-defence the banker must put it out at higher interest, in order to secure himself. In

other words, you tempt him to speculate, which no banker ought to do, and so run the risk of losing your own money.'

'But I hate money to be idle,' repeated Lord Pennyroyal.

'Then all I can see for you is to become banker yourself. You might set up a firm, Pennyroyal, Marjoram, and Co., and take our friend Marjoram into partnership. Then you would get the interest you desire at first hand by legitimate investment.'

At this period of a dull but very sound commercial conversation, a loud snore was heard, as of a grampus escaping from a sword-fish. Every one started up as though it were the last trump. It was a snore that shook the table, and made the glasses jingle, and it came from Colonel Barker, who, having no one to talk to, and not having 100,000*l.* to invest, had fallen fast asleep, and thus blew his trumpet by way of challenge to all comers.

'Bless me, what's that?' said Sir Thomas. 'I declare it's Colonel Barker fallen fast asleep. That at least is a hint that we ought to join the ladies as soon as possible.'

So they left off talking of lands and banking and investments, and in a few minutes were sipping their coffee with the ladies.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FLORRY AND AMICIA BOTH SUCCEEDED IN FINDING OUT SOMETHING.

'As soon as he comes in,' said Florry to Alice, 'I'll make him write it down. He must be able to write.'

This was in continuation of the conversation with her sister, of which we gave a scrap a little while ago.

'Perhaps he can only write in German character,' said Alice; 'and then what he says will be like a fly that has dipped its legs in ink crawling over the paper, and you will be no wiser.'

'I'd make them all write in Roman,' said Florry.

'So would I,' said Alice; 'but then our "woulds" don't go for much.'

So, when Mr. Sonderling came into the room, Florry fastened on him at once, and said,

'Mr. Sonderling, I wish so much you would write that name down on paper.'

'With the highest pleasure,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'I have here my *Bleistift*, what you call your pencil, in my pocket.'

As he said this he pulled out his pencil—a wondrous combination of knife, pen, pencil, and toothpick—and asked,

'Have you paper?'

'Plenty,' said Florry, taking him to a little writing-table. 'This is mamma's own table and writing-things, but we may take a sheet.'

So on a sheet of note-paper, with the monogram of three C's

interlaced for Constance Catherine Carlton, Mr. Sonderling began to write; but before he put pencil to paper he said,

'It is not that I cannot that name pronounce, for I can if I am not bustled. Only hear. It is "Smeess."'

'Smeess!' said Florry; 'I never heard of such a name. There's no such name as "Smeess" in all England, I'm sure.'

'It vonders me,' said Mr. Sonderling, laying down the paper, 'such words to hear. It is the most commonest name in all this land.'

'Do write it, Mr. Sonderling,' said Florry. 'I shall think it so good of you if you will.'

'Well, then,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'now for it; here goes. Behold!' and then, with something like an effort, for Florry had told him he must write in Roman, he wrote, Florry looking on all the while, 'Amicia Smith.'

'Smith!' said Florry. 'Now I can understand you; but why did you not say Smith at once, not "Smiess" or "Smeess," for it sounded much more like the last than the first?'

'Because the organ of the mouth fails me,' said Mr. Sonderling.

'O, thank you!' said Florry. 'So many thanks, Mr. Sonderling!' clutching the autograph in triumph, and running off to Alice.

'What do you think, dear?' she whispered; 'her name was Smith before she married. What fun!'

'Now we shall find out all about her, no doubt,' said Alice; 'but, darling, you know that won't make her a bit less lovely than she undoubtedly is.'

'O, it is plain she is some low-lived person,' said Florry. 'Harry shall know it all, and then he won't look at her, however lovely she is.'

'We shall see,' said Alice, who by this time had her pet lamb, Edward, at her side.

'There she is, talking to Harry,' said Florry. 'I'll go and get something more out of my German friend.'

'Mr. Sonderling,' said Florry, for he was sitting just where she left him, lost in thought, 'will you have some coffee?'

'Thank you,' said Mr. Sonderling; 'but I have already had him.'

'Are you reflecting again?' asked Florry.

'Yes, miss, I reflect. Always I reflect after dinner.'

'That's like cows chewing the cud,' said Florry to herself; and then she went on out loud, 'I wish, Mr. Sonderling, you would leave off reflecting, and tell me a little more about Miss Smith. What was she when you first knew her?'

'I did not know her first,' said Mr. Sonderling, rather to Florry's amazement.

'Then I suppose she knew you first?'

'Not so,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'I did know her father first.'

'O,' said Florry, 'I understand. And pray what was her father?'

'He was a doctor and teacher of tongues,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'and he dwelt at the College of the Deafs and Dumbs at Frankfort-on-the-Maine.'

'A doctor and a teacher of tongues!' said Florry. 'You mean a curer of tongues. He pickled them and sold them; but why should such a man, in such a trade, dwell, as you call it, at the College of the Deafs and Dumbs?'

'That was the very reason,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'and I thank you, miss, for putting the just word into my mouth. He was both a doctor and a teacher, and a curer of tongues, and that was why the little deafs and dumbs were so fond of him.'

'I can't follow you at all,' said Florry, quite out of her depth, 'I can't make out what you mean by a teacher and a curer of tongues. Did he teach the tongues after he cured them, and did the deafs and dumbs eat them?'

'By no means,' said Mr. Sonderling, with a slow laugh; 'for then the deafs and dumbs would have eaten their own tongues.'

'What do you mean?' said Florry in desperation.

'I mean that Doctor Smeess was an English chirurg, who dwelt at the College of the Deafs and Dumbs, and cured their tongues and taught them to speak justly and righteously.'

'Dear me,' said Florry, 'how dreadful! Now I begin to understand you.'

'You should have understood me earlier,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'for my words were very common.'

'And so,' said Florry, silently accepting the reproof, 'Miss Amicia Smith was the daughter of Dr. Smith, who lived in the Deaf and Dumb College at Frankfort, and attended the inmates and tried to cure them.'

'He did not only try,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'he did often heal their tongues.'

'I daresay,' said Florry, rather proud of having extracted so much from Mr. Sonderling; 'but still he lived in the college as a doctor, and Miss Smith lived there with him.'

'O yes, she lived there with him. It was a beauteous abode.'

'Very, I am quite sure,' said Florry. 'And so you knew Dr. Smith first, and Miss Smith afterwards?'

'Just so. I was a student then, home from Heidelberg for the *Ferien*, what they call the holidays at your educational institutes. I do well remember the first day that I beheld Amicia Smeess.'

'Was she very good-looking *then*?' asked Florry, with an emphasis on the 'then,' as though she would not for the world admit that she was good-looking now.

'As fair as the dawn,' said Mr. Sonderling; 'as lovely then, in the spring-tide of her youth, as she is now in the summer of her prime.'

'I do not think her at all good-looking,' said Florry, taking the bit between her teeth again.

'I pity you, miss,' said Mr. Sonderling, fetching a deep '*Ach! der lieber Gott!*' from his breast.

'Have you anything more to tell me about her?' asked Florry.

'Much, very much,' said Mr. Sonderling; 'but see, she regards us, and it is a long story.'

'Another time, then?' said Florry.

'Yes, another time,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'Meantime, I will reflect.'

Then he sank back into his dreamy state; and if he had been alone in his little house at High Beech, we will bet any money that he would have had a pipe in his mouth in half a minute.

'Well,' said Alice, looking up at Florry, 'anything more?'

'Only a doctor's daughter,' said Florry, with a toss of her head.

You are not to suppose from that toss that Florry Carlton was at all naturally proud. On the contrary, she prided herself as little as any girl in her position could. 'After all, we are only a merchant's daughters,' she used to say. 'Every one knows we came down from town. We are not like the Marjorams, who were cutting their neighbours' throats in Normandy, Brittany, and Flanders before the Conquest.' But as she disliked Lady Sweetapple for trying to take Harry Fortescue away from her, it certainly did give her great pleasure to think that, whatever she might be now, she was only a doctor's daughter, and that doctor the resident attendant of the 'deafs and dumbs,' as Mr. Sonderling called them.

While Florry had been pumping the depths of Mr. Sonderling's inner consciousness, Lord Pennyroyal had resumed his economic discussions with Lady Carlton, and had even got down so far in his domestic revelations as to tell her there was no knowing what blacking cost in a large establishment.

'For my part,' he said, 'I wish there was no such thing as blacking. Whoever invented it was no benefactor to householders.'

'I thought it kept the leather from rotting,' said Lady Carlton.

'So they say,' said Lord Pennyroyal; 'but all I know about it is, that I took one of my boots, which split the other day before I had worn it a week—it was a ready-made boot, which I bought in Tottenham-court-road—to Dr. Smelfungus, the great chemist, and he said it was all the "blacking."'

'What blacking do you use?' said Colonel Barker, 'Everett's, or Day and Martin's?'

'O, no,' said Lord Pennyroyal; 'I could not afford that. As one's obliged to have it, I make my coachman make it. They say

it doesn't shine well ; but that's all nonsense—only look at this shoe !'

As he said this, he held up his foot, on which was a certainly very ill-polished pump.

'I'm no dandy,' he said, 'and never wear patent leather. The blacking I make is good enough for me and for the harness ; but I'm sure that blacking rots the leather. And how much do you think it costs me in blacking all the year round, in town and country ?'

'I'm sure I can't tell,' said Lady Carlton.

'Five-and-twenty pounds ! Think of that !' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'Why, it's a small fortune ! Last year it was even more ; and so I had to lay down a rule, that no boots or shoes should be blacked at Farthinghoe Castle or Rosemary Manor after eight o'clock in the morning. Don't you think that's a good rule ?'

'But suppose,' said Lady Carlton, 'any young lady staying with you had a pet pair of boots, and went out, and came home with them muddy, and wanted to wear them again : wouldn't you let her have them cleaned in the middle of the day ?'

'No, I would not,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'A rule is a rule, and must be obeyed. What's the good of making it else ? At Farthinghoe Castle, all the blacking-pots and blacking-brushes are locked up as the clock strikes eight A.M. The key is brought to my butler, and it is as much as his place is worth to let any one have it till six o'clock the next morning.'

What was *Amicia* doing while Florry was getting her early history out of Mr. Sonderling ? We have seen that at last she looked their way, but she had done a good deal before. Harry Fortescue, as we know, was not half pleased when Florry deserted him for the German's conversation at dinner. The goose ! he did not know, though if he had faith in Florry he might have guessed it, that she was all the while labouring in his cause. Men never will understand how whole-hearted women are. If they set their hearts on a thing, they try to do it, and mean to do it. Harry ought to have had confidence in the girl who loved him, and neither at dinner nor after dinner ought he to have been in the least put out to see her talking to Mr. Sonderling. Some of you will say that it was a hard trial of her faith ; but if faith is not to be tried sometimes, what in the world is it worth ?

But Harry Fortescue *was* put out ; and perhaps the reason was, that he had not quite made up his mind that he loved Florry or Florry loved him. Love is slower of growth in some hearts than in others. He fell, therefore, into the jaws of *Amicia*, as Florry would have said, and did say to Alice, 'eating up our young men as though they were bread.'

'It seems a long time since we met, Mr. Fortescue,' said *Amicia* satirically.

'A long time! why, we are always meeting,' said Harry; 'we are never parted.'

'Yes, but there are meetings which are all partings,' said Amicia. 'Do you call it a meeting, when we never can say a word to one another?'

'This morning—' began Harry.

'Yes, this morning,' said Amicia bitterly. 'I suppose it was meeting when we walked down the lime-avenue, guarded by five or six people; or at the cottage, in the strawberry-bed; or when I was in the chair, with you on one side, and Mr. Vernon on the other; or when I was in the pony-carriage with Lady Carlton; or when I came back with her in the same way; or when the gipsy was telling your fortune, and you were so silly, drawing your hand back like a big baby; or, last of all, at dinner, when I sat next to that empty Count.'

Having said all this, Amicia paused for breath, as though she had been a screaming little baby herself.

'But how could I help it, if I had wished it ever so much? I could not dispose of myself. Young men are creatures of Providence, and that Providence is always the lady of the house.'

'I wish you were in my house,' said Lady Sweetapple, in a half-musing way, 'and I were your Providence. I think I could dispose of you very nicely.'

'That, at least, was a speech that no young lady could have made,' you will all say; and you are quite right; but this is one of the many advantages that widows have—they are supposed to know their own mind, and to utter it boldly. What effect this boldness of Lady Sweetapple might have had on Harry Fortescue, it is hard to say; but Amicia's blood was up, and she thought she might as well try to have it out with the man she loved as to that dark young lady in the background.

'There is something I want to know,' she said in a low snake-like way, almost drawling out her words; and then, with a sudden dart, 'Was that dark young lady's name Price?'

This was said so quickly, that Amicia seemed to have no breath left; and as for Harry, his breath too was quite taken away by the question.

You see, of course, that Lady Sweetapple could now put this question without the fear of being detected in reading addresses of letters in the china desk. The gipsy's questions had made the path smooth for her, and she trod it boldly.

'Price, Lady Sweetapple! What do you mean?' said, or rather cried, Harry.

'I mean what I say,' said Amicia. 'Is the dark young lady in the background of whom the gipsy spoke named Price?'

'I sha'n't say,' said Harry. 'It is very wrong, Lady Sweet-

apple, to put any faith in the words of such impostors. As for Price, it all arose out of her saying that every man had his price. Why you should jump to the conclusion that I have my Price, and that she is the stereotyped dark young lady who plays a part in every gipsy prophecy, I am sure I cannot tell. I will not countenance any such nonsense, and I decline to say anything about it.'

'But is it such nonsense?' asked Amicia; 'and can you deny that you know a young lady named Price?'

'It is nonsense,' said Harry; 'and I cannot deny that I do know a young lady named Price. But what does that signify?'

'It may signify a great deal—to your true friends,' said Amicia, purposely lengthening out the latter part of the sentence.

'It ought to make no difference,' said Harry. 'And as I decline to give you any information on the subject, I must beg you to say nothing about Miss Price. Take my word for it, you have been led away by the gipsy to find a nest, but it will turn out a mare's nest.'

'I don't believe it,' said Amicia angrily; 'and I will find out all about it.'

'I defy you!' said Harry, rising with great dignity. In another half-minute he was sitting by the side of Florry Carlton.

'I am so glad you have come back to me,' said Florry; 'I have found out all about her.'

'Her! who?' said Harry, in violent fear; for his head was full of Edith Price, and she was the only 'her' that depressed his mind at that moment.

'How dull you are!' said Florry. 'Why, about Lady Sweet-apple, of course.'

'O!' said Harry, greatly relieved. 'And pray, what have you found out about her, that all the world did not know before?'

'Everything,' said Florry. 'I know her whole history. She was a doctor's daughter, and her name was Smith. What do you think of that?'

'What do I think? Why, that doctors are very good people, especially when your health is good. And as for Smith, it's a fine old name. I wish there were none worse.'

'O Mr. Fortescue!' said Florry.

That was all poor Florry could say. Here had she been talking, from first to last, at least an hour with Mr. Sonderling, and foregoing all Harry Fortescue's delightful nothings, solely to find out something which might warn him against the widow; and all the thanks she got was, 'that doctors were very good people, and Smith a fine old name.' The fact is, that men look on birth and names in a very different light from women. If a man's name were Higginbottom or Ramsbottom, he can make such a figure in the world by his exertions, that instead of mocking at his name, every one shall say,



J. A. Pasquier, del.

Edmund Evans

LADY SWEETAPPLE PRESSES HER ENQUIRY.



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There goes the great Mr. Ramsbottom—he will be lord chancellor one day;’ or ‘General Higginbottom—he will be made a peer if he wins another great battle.’ Nay, he might take his title as ‘Lord Ramsbottom,’ and every one would say, ‘What a very pretty title!’ But if a woman is born a Ramsbottom, what is she to do with such a name, except to change it as soon as possible, and to be sure she never writes on her cards, ‘Mrs. Stanley, born Ramsbottom’?

You see, therefore, why names are much to women, and little to men. They matter as little to one and as much to another as good looks, as to which we have already uttered our opinion.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LADY SWEETAPPLE SINGS.

By this time Lady Pennyroyal had done a little gossip which she had been carrying on with Mr. Beeswing. Count Pantouffles had come back from his smoke. He was like a smoke-jack, and could not get on unless he had his cigar after dinner. Nobody had kissed him; but he came back, not reeking of tobacco, but exhaling fragrant Floriline, or the latest invention to cure the fumes of the nicotian weed. He was all smiles and teeth, as usual. Lady Carlton had done pouring out tea. Mr. Marjoram had dared to take up again to Miss Markham. Mrs. Marjoram and Mr. Rubrick had had a furious engagement, yard-arm to yard-arm with double-botted guns, on baptismal regeneration, and neither would give in, though they were both foaming at the mouth, their throats as dry as dust, and, in fact, reduced to silence. Colonel Barker was flirting with Mrs. Barker, and comparing the colour of her one great emerald with that of Mrs. Marjoram's base imitations. Edward was making love to Alice, Amicia was sitting still and flushed, now staring at Mr. Sonderling, and now thinking of Harry's defiance about Miss Price. Harry and Florry were, as we have seen, rather at variance about the position of doctors and Smiths in society. There was a pause, in fact, in the united action of the party. They had begun to pair like birds on St. Valentine's day, and the evening promised to be delightfully dull.

But this was not what Lady Carlton wished. She saw the want of some common centre in which all could take interest, and she seized the opportunity, when Lord Pennyroyal ended that harangue about blacking, to say,

‘Dear Lady Sweetapple, would you be so kind as to sing us a song?’

‘I thought you had all had enough of me last night,’ said Amicia, telling a terrible story, for certainly to her an ‘all’ without men was

only a quarter of 'all.' Men for her made up three-quarters of the world. She was quite a man's lady, just as some men are quite ladies' men.

'None of us heard you,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'It was all over before we men left our wine.'

'What shall I sing?' said Amicia, as she sat down, and her face grew even more lovely as the enthusiasm of music lighted it up.

'Anything you like,' said Lady Carlton.

Now, we are not going to dwell on Lady Sweetapple's voice except to say that it was very good, and of very great compass.

It was a voice, too, not thin and fatigued, as though it were a silk stuff nearly worn out. It was rich and full, as well as high and low. Nor was it so much the voice as the expression with which she sang that was charming. She sang with her soul or her heart as well as with her voice.

'*Ach! du lieber!*' said the sympathetic Mr. Sonderling. 'That I call true soul melody as well as mouth music.'

So, after she had sung Italian songs, and German songs, and Spanish songs, she took to English ballads, and she sang 'Wapping Old Stairs' and 'Sally in our Alley' so divinely, that tears stood in all eyes.

'Now it is your turn, Mr. Sonderling,' she said. 'Sing.'

She said this almost rudely, especially as they were the only words she had said to the German that evening, and had, so far as they all knew but Florry, never even seen him before; but she said it also with such a tone of command as though she were calling her dog or her slave to the instrument, that all eyes were turned on Mr. Sonderling, expecting him to refuse.

To the surprise of every one, the German rose from his dream and, like a magnetic patient, obeyed the summons.

We have told you already that Mr. Sonderling had a very good voice; a deep bass, *basso profundo*, like dear old Lablache's. He was an accomplished musician too, and accompanied himself admirably. He too sang songs, and, among others, Lablache's song 'Madamina il catalogo,' where that finished valet gives an account of his master's loves in *Don Giovanni*.

'What a list!' said Florry to Alice; 'I wonder if Lady Sweetapple's list has been as long? I daresay it has.' And then he went up to him, as he was still sitting at the instrument, and said, 'Had Miss Smeess as many admirers as the Don had loves?'

'*Ach nein!*' said the ingenuous Mr. Sonderling, 'but she has not so few.'

'I thought so,' said Florry. 'Many thanks;' and then he went up to Lady Sweetapple and said, 'Dear Lady Sweetapple, sing us another song.'

'Shall I sing you something quite new?' asked Amicia.

'O, do! That would be so nice.'

As Mr. Sonderling rose to quit the piano, he made a low bow to Amicia.

'It will not be new to you, Mr. Sonderling. I daresay you will remember it.'

'I remember so many things,' said the German with a sigh.

'Far better to forget them, like a man,' said Amicia.

'Say rather like a woman,' said Mr. Sonderling.

'Silence!' said Amicia in her old imperious tone; and the German shirked off to the corner of a distant sofa, where he sat watching her like a dog.

Then Amicia began to sing. But it was no song, it was rather a recital to a low running accompaniment.

'I wonder if you will like it?' she said; 'I call it "The Siege," and it begins with a prelude.' And then she dashed off at once:

'Fair Helen fired Paris first,
And then she fired royal Troy.
What reck'd she, though she were the worst
Of women, so she had her boy?
Alas! the world is still the same,
A world of women without shame,
Who but to show their sleight of hand,
And but to win a little fame,
In other households hurl the brand,
And smile to see the rising flame.
And therefore, though thy face be fair,
And though with her thou couldst compare,
Yet never shall my peace be marr'd
By thee. Behold the gates are barr'd,
The bridges up, and this old town
Be sure thou never shalt burn down.
Pass then in peace this fortress by,
Nor rouse our dull desires,
For in the sparkle of thine eye
Lurk many million blazing fires.
Fair Helen smiled, for by her eyes
I knew 'twas Helen in disguise.
Before that town
She sat her down,
And murmur'd out these melodies.'

'That's the prelude,' she said; 'and now comes the first fyte, or part, which I call "Pity."'

Then she warbled on:

'I was a queen. I dwelt in peace
Till Paris came and conquer'd me;
His sweet low voice breathed 'Fly from Greece!
I fled. He bore me o'er the sea—
O'er waves as dark as purple wine.
The dolphins rose to gaze at me,
And play'd above the barren brine.'

THREE TO ONE

We reach'd the windy plain of Troy.
 We pass'd the gate. Old Priam smiled,
 And Hecuba ran wild with joy
 To welcome back her darling child.
 And all men said who look'd on me,
 She is the fairest woman alive.
 The people cried in silly glee,
 Now Troy shall flourish, Troy shall thrive!

My sullen husband follow'd, slow
 But sure, a bloodhound on our track;
 And with him all that Greece could show
 Of ships and chiefs to win me back.
 I was the apple of all eyes,
 They fought and died for me, their prize.

Ten years they fought, ten years withstood
 Great Troy their onslaught for my sake.
 What though her plain was bathed in blood?
 She knew that Helen was at stake.
 All husbands burn'd my face to see,
 All women laid their woes on me.

Since then I have been hunted down,
 I die not—Helen cannot die;
 But when I see a walled town,
 My doom is not to pass it by.
 In pity, warder, let me in,
 That I may make amends for sin.'

'That is the first part,' she said, pausing; 'I hope you like it.'

'It is wonder-pretty!' said Mr. Sonderling.

'The next part is called "Love,"' said Amicia; 'shall I sing it?'

'Pray go on,' said several voices. Then Amicia proceeded:

'Her sweet strain ceased, but not a word
 In answer to her prayer was heard,
 And sentinel to sentinel
 Pass'd on the watchword, "All is well."

Night fell, the moon rose red as blood,
 Before the gate still Helen stood,
 And now she sang in fiercer mood,
 Till all hearts long'd for Love's sweet food.

They say I cling to courts and camps.
 They lie: I cling but where I'm free.
 I linger oft with trulls and tramps;
 They love—that makes them kin to me.
 Wherever I on earth have trod,
 My God is love, and love is God.

On soft greensward, on mossy tofts,
 Where pale pink May-blooms softly fall,
 Ay, even on hayricks and in lofts
 The bed of love is strewn for all.'

'Then comes some more passionate stuff,' said Amicia, 'which I pass over. But perhaps you have heard this bit before:'

'In summer, when the hay is mown,
I stand beneath the linden shade,
Where thick the golden dust drops down,
And side by side lie man and maid;
The bees are busy up above
While they lie idle, lost in love.

At nightfall, by the summer sea,
Where sands are smooth'd by soft west wind,
On Noman's land, where all are free,
And men are bold, and women kind,
I speed the vows that lovers plight,
When lips are moist and eyes flash bright.

And shall this little walled town,
Whose only virtue is its age,
Dare to rob Helen of her own?
Dare to withstand my passion's rage?
No, warder, learn my victory,
As o'er the rest, is sure o'er thee.

The strain ceased, and again no word
To prove that any heart was stirr'd,
Save that methought the sentinel
Less stoutly utter'd, "All is well."'

'That's the end of the second fyte,' said Amicia, 'but I have skipped ever so much. Now comes the third, and it is called "Reason."'

Then she warbled on:

'Again she smiled, again she spoke;
But now 'twas not of vain desire,
Her cheeks were flush'd with wisdom's fire.
Day dawn'd at once, and morning broke,
And all that misty realm of sense
Was lighted with intelligence.

I am the offspring of the gods,
But stronger far than they;
For men were then but stones and clods,
Now they are priceless clay.
I rule like them the hearts of men,
But men are nobler now than then.

For what was Juno but a scold?
Athene but a learnèd bore?
And as for Venus, why, we know
Hers was a naughty name of yore;
My rod has swallow'd all their rods,
Mere idols are the ancient gods.'

'There,' said Amicia, bursting out into a laugh, 'I really cannot sing any more. You must be all sick of me.'

'No, no!' said Harry, 'I call it a divine recital.'

A remark for which Florry gave him such a reproachful look that ought to have gone right through his heart, but it did not. He was look-proof, for the armour of magnetism had covered his heart.

'What a strange performance!' said Lady Pennyroyal to Lady Carlton; 'more like an actress than a lady.'

'Perhaps,' said Lady Carlton; 'but then, you know, Lady Sweetapple has lived so much abroad, that her ways are not as our ways.'

'Nor her principles as our principles, I should hope,' said Lady Pennyroyal, who in matters of what she called 'decorum' was the very pink of propriety.

'What did you think of it?' said Colonel Barker to Mrs. Marjoram.

'I never liked Helen even in my girlish days,' said that acid lady. 'She was a very overrated woman. And as for all the kings and princes of Greece leaving their wives and families, and fighting for ten years for such a baggage, I have no patience with them.'

'Very true,' said Mr. Beeswing, who wished to draw Mrs. Marjoram out, 'but some of them got the worst of it when they got home. Just as modern husbands catch it, when they misbehave and stay out at night. There was Agamemnon.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'I know all about him. I've looked him out in Lemprière. His wife Clytem—Clytem—what was her name?'

'Clytemnestra,' suggested Mr. Beeswing.

'Yes, Clytemnestra chopped his head off with a chopper.'

'No, not with a chopper; with an axe, or pole-axe, and she had a man to help her, recollect.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'What was his name?'

'Ægisthus,' again suggested Mr. Beeswing.

'Yes, that was his name,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'A pretty fellow he was for a man. Why wasn't he fighting at Troy with the rest, instead of staying at home, like so many bad husbands of our time, to make love to another man's wife? They were a bad set, those old Greeks, men and women alike. See how Socrates treated his wife.'

'I thought,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'it was Xanthippe who ill-treated Socrates.'

'I don't believe it,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'I think Socrates was no better than he should have been. See what company he kept, drinking with all the wild young men of his time, and asking people questions. I hate men who ask questions. I don't wonder the Ottomans killed Socrates. I would have killed him. And then poor Xantippet, when she comes to bewail her husband and to take leave of him, is treated as though she were a dog or a brute, and turned

out of the room. He might well order a cock for Æsculapius. There was no respect for woman in his nature, ugly old ape that he was !'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW THEY ALL WENT TO BED.

BUT by this time it was getting late. Amicia's recital had lasted a long while ; and it really was, as Lady Carlton said, time for all good people to go to bed. Miss Markham, indeed, had departed long ago. Dear little old lady ! While Lady Sweetapple was pouring out her melodies she might have been seen trotting down the lime avenue in the moonlight, like a fairy overtaken by old age, so slight and frail. There was something ethereal and elfin about her look. Modern novelists of the sensational school would have called her 'wierd,' and spelt it 'weird,' not in the least knowing what the word means, only it comes in so well, like 'felicity' in that famous sermon. What famous sermon ? Why, that of which an old country-woman was asked how she liked it. 'O, I did like it so much ! and, most of all, that blessed word "felicity." ' 'And pray, what do you think felicity means ?' asked the questioner. 'Mean ? Why, it means something nice, like the inside of a pig.' Much in the same way do modern novelists use the word 'wierd.'

But there was Miss Markham, trotting down the avenue and along the road—so dusty in the morning, but now slaked by the thunder-shower ; and soon after, almost before Amicia had ended her recital, Miss Markham was fast asleep in bed.

We ought to have told you that when Lady Carlton asked the Pennyroyals, she hoped they would stay a day or two. So the Pennyroyals did not take that long drive all the way back to Farthinghoe Castle. They were lodged in the state rooms, in which it was not a tradition, but a fact, that Charles II., that last of our merry monarchs, had slept when he paid a long visit to Sir Timothy Tyrrell. One form of his mirth was in borrowing people's money, and not paying them, but taking out the interest, as L'Estrange said, by ruining the lenders by long visits. No wonder that the Tyrrells soon came to an end—first lending their money, and never getting either principal or interest back, and then by entertaining their royal debtor for weeks and weeks. Ah, but, you will say, they had grants of land. Well, grants of lands in those days were much less valuable than land is now ; and money was worth much more ; so that in Charles II.'s time the more land you had from the Crown, and the more money you lent on it, the worse it was for you. It was what the lawyers call a *damnosa hæreditas*. 'But if the Tyrrells had held their land till now, they would have been immensely rich.' No doubt of it. But then they couldn't hold it, and had to sell it,

and were ruined, like so many other people who can't afford to wait for their money.

But there were the state rooms, with Charles II.'s bed, in which he and Catherine of Braganza had slept for once at least in their lives. There it was, with its faded blue brocade curtains, and its high rickety tester, that looked as if it were going to topple down on your head when you slept in it—another shape of the Damocles' sword which hangs over the heads of kings. There was the silver toilet-service, the very dish in which his most sacred Majesty was shaved, and in which, if he pleased, Lord Pennyroyal might have been shaved by his barber, if he had one, at a vast expense of lather and soap—which he would not have grudged, as it belonged to some one else, though he might have groaned at such waste as a bad example.

There was the queen's room, with its silver sconces fixed into the wall, and its straight-backed chairs, covered with embroidery representing various passages out of the life of Reynard the Fox. Here was Reynard's base piece of flattery to the crow, whereby he got the cheese—which ought to have reminded Sir Timothy Tyrrell of the way in which the king had coaxed him out of his money; and here was his famous declaration that the grapes were sour, because he could not get them. Here was the fox dining with the crane, and the crane dining with the fox. Here was the bear frozen in by the tail into the ice by the tricks of the fox; and the wolf deluded by Reynard to go into the priest's hen-house, only to be nearly flayed alive. Here was Reynard about to be hanged, and pardoned while standing on the ladder under the gallows because he had told that noble king the lion where a vast treasure was hidden, which no one could find but Reynard himself. Here was Reynard going on a pilgrimage to Rome for his sins; and here was the throttling of the rabbit his guide, and his return to court, and final triumph over his enemies. The whole story of Reynard the Fox was worked on those uncomfortable chairs and couches; and poor Catherine, in her withdrawing-room, might have felt that, even for queens, the grapes of this world are often sour.

Then there was tapestry, and very good tapestry, hung on the walls of both rooms. Here a noble Italian plaisance, with gardens, and groves, and fountains, and waterfall, and terraces. In the foreground, on a balcony, were ladies looking down on cavaliers going out to hunt; and on the terrace were statues of gods and heroes; and in one corner, in a cool shady pool, were wood-nymphs bathing, and rude rustics—not, alas, doomed to be punished like Actæon—peeping at them between the trees.

In another a mighty battle was raging—cannons firing, horsemen charging, pikemen flying, swords crossed, saddles emptied, limbs lopped off, ghastly wounds, everywhere confusion, fire, and slaughter.

As one gazed on it, one heard the roar of battle, and the eyes were sated with blood and death. What battle it was no one could tell. To find out was a puzzle always set to visitors at High Beech; but the guest was yet to come who could say what battle it was. It was, and remained, a great battle, and nothing more.

So the tapestry went on, covering the four sides of these two great square rooms. They were beautiful pieces of Italian work, older far than the house. No doubt Sir Timothy Tyrrell bought them, like the chairs with the Fox and the Grapes on them, to do honour to their most sacred majesties; and now Lord and Lady Pennyroyal had the benefit of them. Though the colours were a little gone, and the silk in the faces of the figures had turned black, making them all look like blackamoors, they were noble works of art, and if put up to auction at Christie's would have brought a mint of money from some gentleman with not a twentieth part of the means, but a thousand times more taste than the Right Hon. the Earl Pennyroyal.

'I don't like tapestry,' said Lord Pennyroyal, just before he retired to rest in King Charles's bed. 'If I had all this I should sell it, and have the walls papered.'

'I should keep it,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'It would be a desecration to strip it from the walls which it has so long covered.'

So they went to bed.

As for the rest, Florry and Alice were very happy; but they could not help thinking that Lady Sweetapple's 'exhibition,' as Florry called it, had created a sensation in the minds of both their lovers.

'I thought even your lamb seemed half inclined to break his string, dear,' said Florry.

'And what do you think of yours?' said Alice.

'I am not quite sure,' said Florry. 'But it is a great comfort to think that her name was Smith, and that she was a doctor's daughter. I am so happy to think, too, that after dinner, while I was talking to Mr. Sonderling, she and Harry had a quarrel.'

'How do you know that?' asked Alice.

'Because I saw her face so flushed after they parted,' said Florry; 'and more, because Harry told me so,' added Florry with an air of intense satisfaction.

'What a strange creature that Mr. Sonderling is!' said Alice.

'You heard mamma ask him to come to luncheon to-morrow, and what Lady Sweetapple said to him?'

'I only heard what he said—that he would have the highest pleasure. What did she say?'

'All she said,' said Alice, 'was: "Mind you do come, Mr. Sonderling; I want to speak to you."'

'She's so vain—she flirts with every man; and more than that,

with ever so many at once. She'd flirt with Lord Pennyroyal if she could.'

'Ah,' said Alice smartly, 'but you know he couldn't afford it.'

'And now,' said Florry, 'let us go to bed and sleep soundly, if we can. It has not been such a bad day after all.'

As for Amicia, she was not so happy. When Mrs. Crump wanted to gossip, she would not let her. She had heard quite enough of high life below stairs, she said. She was tired; she wanted to go to bed.

'There, Crump, you may go,' she said, when that assiduous maid had only half discharged her nightly duties.

'O, my lady! Go to bed, and you only half undressed? I never!'

'Never or not, go!' said Amicia, actually stamping her tiny foot.

'To find him here,' she said, as she flung herself into that easy-chair which is now her confessional to us—'to find him here, of all the places in the world! How true of Andersen, when he said that one never knows one's old love after the lapse of years! Yet it is I that am changed. Not at all,' as she stood up for a moment to look in the glass. 'It isn't that; only—only circumstances are changed. I am sure he told her everything. I saw them talking at dinner and afterwards. Yet what harm can he do me? One's not bound to marry one's first love. How ridiculous it seems at this distance! He is much altered, too—much more than I am. I thought women altered more than men—in looks, I mean, and in heart too. I wonder if he will be faithful to me? He always had a generous heart. We shall see to-morrow. And that Miss Price? How boldly Harry defied me! There is some mystery about that young lady; and if, if'—she said 'if' two or three times, and then went on—'if I can't have my way, others shall hear of Miss Edith Price besides myself. And now to bed. How heartbreaking doubt is!'

Of course the smokers had gone to the smoking-room. However late the ladies might be, Count Pantouffles said there was always time for a cigarette.

'That was a very fine performance—don't you think so, Colonel Barker?' asked the Count, behind a cloud of his own raising.

'I've seen things very like it on the stage,' said Colonel Barker. 'To me it sounded like rant. I hate declamation in ladies!'

'It was very fine,' said Harry. 'To me it sounded like real poetry.'

'And real music,' said Edward Vernon. 'I thought so too,' backing up Harry like a staunch pointer.

Soon after the smoking came to an end; and as they crawled up to bed—for even Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon were tired—Edward turned to Harry on the landing, and asked:

'I say, Harry, did you write to Edith?'

'Of course I did,' said Harry; 'and sent her a cheque.'

'That's all right,' said Edward. 'You know the money was due on the first of the month.'

'I know all about it,' said Harry; 'and I meant to have sent it before I left town; but this visit made me put it off till to-day. But it went to-night; and she'll get it to-morrow morning.'

'That's all right,' said Edward again.

And then the two friends turned each into his own room, and were soon fast asleep.

EST PROCUL HINC TELLUS

I WATCH'D the way-worn sun last night
Sink far within the rosy west,
Where amid lengthening lakes of light
Float the calm islands of the blest.

I saw, and cried: 'O love, I wait—
Smooth is the sea, the wind is fair;
We'll sail toward yon golden gate,
And leave this desert of Despair!

The summer-time of life is gone;
The weary world is old and worn;
One effort,—and the land is won,
Girt with the purple hills of Morn.'

T. H. D.

THE HEBE OF MINE INN

OVER the fields when shadows are long,
And sweet is the breath of trampled hay,
The crimson West ablaze in our eyes,
To the wood-side inn we wend our way.

Hidden in plane and chestnut and elm,
Smother'd in lilac and apple blooms,
A swinging casement alone reveals
The hostel cool in its mellow glooms.

Grim are its chambers ; but through them waft
Fitful gusts of the blossomy air,
Odours of spices, whiffs of fruits,
And the breath of wine is everywhere.

Pleasant to sit in the amber light,
Or the purple shadows deeper grown,
And to watch the flasks with heart of flame,
Or drain a glass like a bubble blown.

Pleasanter still when a dainty face
Comes flushing in through the golden glow,
With black eyes flashing and lips a-pout,
And bosom heaving its rosy snow.

Then for the bout : the arrowy jest,
The glittering sally midway caught,
The bandied word and a ringing laugh,
And a voice that is but laughter taught :

Right swiftly thus are the moments sped,
And darkness falls on the merry din ;
'Tis night, and going we last behold
The face of the Hebe of mine inn.

WILLIAM SAWYER.



Thomas Gray, del.

F. Kempen, sc.

THE HEBE OF MINE INN.



CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

THE AMERICAN PRESS

Is ordinary cases the ephemeral literature of a country forms a very fair criterion by which one can judge the moral and intellectual advancement of its people—putting, of course, aside the era of the dark ages and the times anterior to the invention of printing, when everyday intelligence was transmitted either by word of mouth, or by epistolary correspondence passed on from hand to hand. The journalism of America is, however, a curious exception to this rule in many respects; for nowhere else, perhaps, in the whole civilised world where news circulates are such peculiar examples to be found of education allied with ignorance, morality with depravity, stagnancy with go-a-headitiveness, and political acuteness and personal blackguardism in juxtaposition, as in the daily and weekly columns of the United States newspaper press. And this is the more noticeable on this side of the water, from the fact of the American people having sprung, like ourselves, from the same Anglo-Saxon stock. Perhaps that is the *raison d'être*; but were they of foreign descent, the contrast between English and Transatlantic journalism would not be quite so glaring as it is.

Taking up a paper published in the Southern or Western States, for instance, and estimating the culture and education of the citizens of those portions of the country by the tone of its contents, one would think them on a par with the contemporaries of Horne Tooke, and their intelligence equal to that of the period when the *Mercury*, the *London Mirror*, or the *Flying Postman* were the representatives of public opinion amongst us. Look at a New England journal, and you see a feeble imitation of the worst features of the continental literature of this genus, mixed up with mawkish piety and a laughable egotism, which would persuade you that 'down East' was the centre of civilisation, and Boston the 'hub of the universe,' or modern Athens, as it vaingloriously dubs itself. Scan a New York sheet, on the other hand, and you will be surprised at its wonderful combination of enterprise and milk-and-waterishness, romance and ribaldry; and yet you will find it contain great vitality, while its proprietors apparently spare no pains or expense in collecting news on every possible topic from almost every available part of the globe, and are ready to make any new scientific invention or commercial opening subservient to its requirements. But each and all evince a similar weakness of system and deficiency of backbone or stamina, which is very remarkable, when one takes into consideration the undoubted

ability and progressive spirit which they otherwise possess. What is the cause and reason of this it would be hard to surmise. It is not from want of popular support and encouragement, for the Americans are the greatest newspaper readers in the world; and every little petty village that springs up in the backwoods on the borders of a railway, if it has but fifty inhabitants, has its own independent journal to ventilate its opinions and express its sentiments. It is not owing to defective intellect or native ignorance: the nation is sharp enough in all conscience; and you seldom come across a man or woman, in however humble circumstances and in any part of the States, who cannot read and write, except, mayhap, a newly-arrived immigrant. More probably it is due to the natural electric hurry, which is one of the strongest typical characteristics of men of the New World; a hurry which leads them to skim on the surface of things, instead of investigating them to the bottom; to be satisfied with any temporary structure so long as it will serve their turn and last their time. However, this is a question which is beyond our scope here. The purport of the present paper is rather to sketch the prominent points of American journalism, exhibited in the leading organs of the country, than enter into analytical discussion on the exceptional eccentricities of our distant cousins.

The principal daily newspapers of the United States are, as we know, published in America's chief city, New York; and of these most remarkable ones are the *Herald*, the *World*, the *Times*, and the *Tribune*; the three last being humorously catalogued by James Gordon Bennett, the *deus ex machina* of the former, as 'world, the flesh, and the devil.' Of the four, the *Tribune* stands *par excellence* at the head, both for its veracity and the generality with which it is conducted; while it displays a singular integrity of purpose in advocating its ends, no matter how wrong-headed those ends may be. Horace Greeley, the editor and proprietor of this journal, is a man of large heart, philanthropic nature, and broad talent. Although bigoted in his views, he has the interests of his country embodied, as it were, in his very being; tempered with a kindly friendship for mankind in general and the negro race in particular; adopting them, like a second Wilberforce, and being always anxiously considerate of their welfare. In appearance he is short, small, and insignificant, with a mild benevolent expression of face, which gives him what a satirist would describe as a 'harmless' look, lacking somewhat in dignity. When excited, he speaks in a peculiarly high falsetto voice, resembling the querulous intonation of a peevish child; and he is likewise distinguished by carelessness in dress; his old white beaver hat with bristling fur, and dingy, dun-coloured surtout of unconscionable length, having long made him the jest of his compeers even in the 'empire city,' where

exceptionable toilets are certainly not at a premium. Altogether he is an oddity, but a very high-principled and good-hearted one.

The leading articles, or 'editorials' as they are styled in America, of the *Tribune* are the only ones of the kind which could be compared with those seen in our London papers; as the subjects taken up are usually well handled, and their writers appear to possess *some* knowledge at least of what they are treating. The other dailies, on the contrary, exhibit a crass ignorance of well-known historical events which would shock a fourth-form boy, are oblivious of contemporary criticism and politics, and set the common principles of ordinary composition completely at defiance in the most astounding manner possible. Day after day you see their columns filled with rapid assertions and trashy diatribes; there is not the slightest attempt at the inductive reasoning and judicial summing-up which should characterise a leading article that is intended to instruct public opinion and guide the popular judgment. The *Tribune* has an average circulation of some fifty thousand copies in the city in which it is published; but in the country its weekly edition, which contains a statistical summary of the markets, and general notes on agriculture and trade, in addition to an epitome of the daily issue, sells enormously, and is sworn to by every farmer in the States, from Maine to California, farmers being mostly Republican, or Constitutional, in their tastes and proclivities, as in England. It is to be regretted, however, that Mr. Greeley, now that he has realised his pet project of freeing the negro and elevating him to the proud position—so long denied him—of 'a man and a brother,' should still continue to fan the violent radical partisan feeling which keeps up strife and ill blood between the North and South, especially now that the war is over, and pacification is vitally necessary to the country. His was the pen which advocated the 'peace at any price' doctrine current during the last year of the struggle; and it seems contrary to the whole principle of his life that he, who urged moderation then, should trample on the vanquished when the contest is over. The theory of 'reconstruction' in America is, however, viewed from two different standpoints by the Democratic and Republican factions; and their party politics are much more antagonistic than with us. Besides, we often sacrifice public good for private feeling; and when we watch the present lamentable state of things in France, owing to the same or a similar cause, we can make allowances for our Transatlantic cousins and Horace Greeley. The latter too, it should be mentioned, has changed his tactics of late, since his visit down South in pursuit of the Ku-Klux Khan; and he was the first that offered to be bail for Mr. Jefferson Davis, the ex-president of the late Confederate States, when he was placed on his mock trial for causing the so-called 'rebellion;' although sundry people said he did it for the purpose of 'heaping coals of

fire' on the head of his quondam enemy, with what success is uncertain.

Next to the *Tribune* in order of merit, as regards the dignity of journalism, must be placed the *New York Times*, a paper which was conducted very ably for some years by the late Mr. Henry Raymond, one of the most polished and cultivated literary men of the States. He was not only an accomplished scholar, but also a remarkably talented debater and politician; and, unlike the general run of his brother members for Congress, was a perfect gentleman. In his articles he always showed considerable finesse; and where Horace Greeley would deal ponderous sledge-hammer-like blows like Carlyle, Mr. Raymond preferred to creep through the loopholes in his opponent's armour. The *New York Times* is, however, but a very feeble copy of its great English prototype. It does not even profess to follow the lead of the *vox populi*, which certainly cannot be assimilated over the water to the *vox dei*; but it generally appears to struggle against popular opinion as long as it can, and then, when it is unwillingly forced into a contrary groove, it yields with a bad grace, and naturally gets laughed at for its pains. When Andrew Johnson was president, Mr. Raymond was one of his strongest partisans, and vehemently in favour of the democratic party. Towards the end of his term of office, and when the memorable impeachment was looming before the Tennessee tailor, the conductor of the *Times* appeared to wake up suddenly to the consciousness that the president was no longer the favourite of the people, although he had died his political death months before; and the journal veered round thereupon as incontinently as a weathercock, and abandoned 'Old Andy' and the democrats to their fate. Latterly it seems to have adopted a new point of departure; and has for the past few months been marking out a strong policy by waging a deadly paper war with the Tammany Hall Association, and by exposing the corruptions of the New York city government—one of the most corrupt municipalities, perhaps, that ever existed in any country at any period.

Looking at it simply in the light of a newspaper in the original acceptation of the term, apart from its moral tone and bearing, the *Herald* is undoubtedly qualified to take precedence of all other American journals. James Gordon Bennett, who and whose paper are tolerably well known to most Englishmen who have never seen either, on account of the rabid abuse of this country for which they are both celebrated, seems to have had one sole impulse since he landed in New York a beggared Scotchman some forty years ago, and that has been to make his paper the most complete and efficient medium of intelligence throughout the States. By dint of pandering to the vitiated taste of the mob, and taking advantage of every little opening afforded him—even submitting to a horse-whipping or two

to secure notoriety—he has succeeded in establishing the *Herald* on such a basis that it eclipses all its competitors in news, circulation, and advertisements—that prime source of newspaper wealth; and, in some respects, it would be worthy of imitation by our leading organs. The indefatigable energy and enterprise of the man is something wonderful. One instance alone will bear this out. When the Prince of Wales visited Canada, and all the American papers with their customary flunkysim were anxious to record his doings and give the first information of his arrival at Niagara on Yankee ground, Mr. Bennett's reporter was of course not absent from the scene of the expected ceremonial. In this case, as there was only one set of wires down to New York, each different representative of the press wanted to be first in possession of the telegraph, so as to secure the earliest publication of the news before the others could forward their despatch. As the Prince did not arrive at the time appointed, the reporters, tired with waiting and trying to forestall each other, made up their minds for a general scramble when the royal visitor came—with the exception of the one belonging to the *Herald*, who telegraphed down to Mr. Bennett to know what course he should pursue. The canny Scot immediately replied, to retain the wire at all hazards, and to do so he could commence by telegraphing down the book of Genesis. This was done right through, and still the Prince did not make his appearance. 'What shall I do next?' inquired the reporter. 'Send along the book of Revelation!' responded the Spartan in New York; and this was actually commenced and half completed before the energetic proprietor of the *Herald* was able to announce to the public that the Prince of Wales had actually stepped on American soil, and describe what royalty said and did while yet miles away from the empire city. This feat of scriptural telegraphy cost over five hundred pounds, and the reader can see the bills paid for the same any day on application at the office in New York. Each paper in the country is always desirous of emulating its contemporaries in obtaining the first information of any event or incident of interest, and spares no expense to further that object; but the *Herald* has certainly the most decided pull in this respect, for its capital is enormous, and its staff is equal to that of all the other journals put together. Not a thing hardly happens in the country or abroad that it does not immediately contain a full account of. The moment a railway accident, an appalling murder, a political catastrophe, or a domestic tragedy happens, a reporter is promptly dispatched to the spot, should one not be there already, which is more than likely, no matter how distant it is; and the most exhaustive particulars are published of the same as soon as possible afterwards. When the Atlantic cable was laid successfully in 1866, Bennett was the first to utilise it; and, by his large outlay in obtaining a full report of the King of Prussia's speech on

the meeting of the German Parliament after the victories of the ten days' war, forced the other newspaper proprietors into using it, and thus was an agent towards the commercial success of Mr. Cyrus Field's undertaking. At that time the cost of cable messages was a dollar in gold a word—4s. 2d.; so the expense of a column of nonpareil type can be imagined as something more than trifling. Innumerable anecdotes are told of the dodges made use of in order to supplant the other journals. Once at a prize-fight in St. Louis on the Mississippi, some three years ago, a *Herald* reporter, after the battle was over, made the regular telegraphic operator tipsy; and, locking him up, himself manipulated the wires, to the exclusion of all the other correspondents and the victory of the paper he represented. During the civil war between the Northern and Southern States, this journal had no less than twenty-six members of its staff engaged in the field collecting news; and these gentlemen were employed in both camps, and had to enlist even, if they could obtain information in no other way. It may be also remembered that a *Herald* correspondent attached to the Abyssinian expedition was the first to give us the account of the victory at Magdala, the news having been telegraphed first to America, and back again through the cable to London.

Considering it merely as a *news*-paper, as has been already observed, it is certainly most ably conducted; and in its general fund of information from all parts of the world, enterprise, and for the arrangement of its sub-editing, presents a marked contrast to the remainder of the American press—much to their disadvantage. When it is regarded from another point of view, however, there is a sad falling off to be noticed. The scurrilous personality and foul-mouthed abuse which marked the early growth of the *Herald* and rendered Bennett's name a by-word not only in America, but over here as well—Dickens drew an admirable picture of him, and it is in *Martin Chuzzlewit*—have somewhat disappeared, it is true; but the character of the journal is still unenviable; and its want of veracity and disregard of morality are as apparent now as they were when it first started.

A highly respectable American journal some few years back gave a very caustic view of the estimation in which Mr. Bennett is held by the more thinking portion of the community to whom he daily supplies his news. 'The general impression,' observed the critic, 'is, that the editor of the *Herald* is constitutionally incapable of telling the truth. It may be so; but we should feel much better satisfied of the fact if he made the attempt. We defy any man to point out a single incident in his whole life, or a single sentence in the files of the *Herald*, from the day it was first started until now, which indicates the faintest possible preference for truth over falsehood. From the beginning to the end of his whole career, he has

been steadily and unswervingly consistent in never telling the truth when a lie would answer his purpose half as well. This may be "constitutional," or it may be the result of calculation; but it is systematic. Wherever he has an object to accomplish, he never shows the slightest scruple as to the means of reaching it; and as in nine cases out of ten his objects are purely malignant and devilish, naturally enough falsehood and calumny are the weapons which he wields. The leading articles of this journal are even worse than the most inferior specimens produced by the provincial press of the States, and those are curious compositions enough. They evince an utter absence of dignity, knowledge, and scholarly writing; and were it not for the policy which actuates them—that of blinding the ignorant, vulgar, and rowdies of the city—might be looked upon as a sort of light literature of humorous tendencies, admirably suited to a *Transatlantic Punch*, if such could live under the infliction. One day sees the paper coolly advocating some preposterous scheme; the next refuting it with scorn, and heaping ridicule on its projectors and those who might believe in it, utterly ignoring its own share in the transaction; in fact, killing the child and bringing it to life again, as the editor did who was in want of a paragraph in order to fill a column—only doing so on a larger scale. But it never exhibits any prescience into futurity, nor comments on any subject until the rumour concerning it has already become public property. Its changes and literary somersaults are something ludicrous. When the Emperor Napoleon had already begun to withdraw his troops from Mexico, and Marshal Bazaine, the late hero of Metz, was just going to leave, the *Herald* boldly advised the United States Government to declare war immediately against France—after all occasion for such had already disappeared! Again, when the Fenians made their paltry raid on Canada, it was jubilant over the downfall of the British Lion; but the moment President Johnson caused the Union troops to interfere at Buffalo and capture 'General' Sweeny's ragged army, it burst into a scold of indignation at the executive for not interfering before, and laughed the poor Fenians to death, although slyly egging them on all the while. England, however, is the great resource of Bennett, and he is never tired of abusing her and everything belonging to us. But it would be a waste of paper to dilate farther on his alleged special characteristics. Suffice it to say, that he is believed never to forgive a grudge even after the lapse of years, and has no policy save that of advancing his own interests. It is well that he is so well known, that no one takes a word he prints in sober seriousness; for his malevolent advice, if acted upon, would produce incalculable trouble both to his adopted country and the world at large. But the Americans are far too wide awake to play Faust to his Mephistopheles. As for his grudges, they are perhaps excusable; for we have had an instance on this side of the water of

an obnoxious minister imposing a special tax in order to retaliate on the opposition of a leading journal; and the same paper has been known to treat any one it disliked to a species of political, or rather literary, ostracism.

The *World*, the remaining newspaper of the four principal New York journals, is a strong democratic organ, and does not call for any special comment. Occasionally its articles show merit, but it has too low a tone ever to rise beyond mediocrity; although it frequently endeavours to out-herald the *Herald* in running down England and things English. Manton Marble, its chief proprietor, was the originator of what is called the New York Associated Press, a company formed by the leading editors in the States for the acquirement and diffusion of news on the coöperative system, something similar in its operation to the working of Renter's in London and Havas' agency in Paris. Besides the *World*, the *New York Journal of Commerce* may be mentioned as the prototype of our *Mark-lane Express*, and the *Courrier des Etats Unis* and *Staats Zeitung* the representative organs of the French and German residents of the city.

The first newspaper started in America was originated at Boston in the year 1690: there are now more than eight thousand in the country, of which number no less than five hundred are dailies, and eighty of these latter, besides seven hundred odd weeklies and bi-weeklies, are published in the state of New York alone. The country press is more distinguished for wit than that of the chief city, but it is wit of a very low class, which savours more of vulgarity and profanity than of humour or piquancy. The New Orleans *Picayune* is about the best of the Southern journals, which before the war ranked far higher than they do now, as may be expected from the trials and tribulations their proprietors have gone through. The Baltimore *Star* is also a very fair specimen of an American journal. It is not perhaps generally known that Admiral Semmes of the late Confederate navy, so celebrated as the commander of the far-famed *Sumter* and never-to-be-heard-the-last-of Alabama, is now the editor of a newspaper down in Georgia. Of the Western press, *La Crosse Democrat* is usually esteemed the ablest and 'smartest.' It is conducted by 'Brick' Pomeroy, a bitter opponent and ruthless pursuer of General Butler, whom he always dubs the 'Beast' or 'Spoons' in the columns of the *Democrat*, in allusion to the scandalous order which that officer gave to his soldiers for the treatment of the Southern ladies when the Federal troops captured New Orleans, and to the current belief of his peculations in levying on the family plate of the inhabitants when in occupation of that city. Brick Pomeroy is what is termed a 'live' newspaper man in the States; and certainly, by his great originality of thought and forcible style of expression, shows himself equal to Mark Twain, the au

of 'The Jumping Frog,' and but slightly inferior to poor Artemus Ward. The *Alta California*, published in San Francisco, is likewise a good journal, and not below the level of the New York sheets. The *Boston Post* is the representative organ of the Eastern States; but the general run of the Massachusetts and Connecticut papers exhibit too much of the Pecksniffian bias to please any English reader; and although the New Englanders pride themselves on their culture, they are far below the standard of the general press of America. Counting by the circulation of the many and various newspapers published throughout the States, it is estimated by the last census taken that there are twelve papers produced annually for every man, woman, and child of the population.

The weekly and literary newspapers of the United States, although in some points better than the average journalism of the country, are, to speak truthfully, 'weaklies' indeed; for those of any respectability are few in number, and, judging their success by their circulation, unappreciated. Jonathan, as yet, is far too matter-of-fact and 'go-a-head' to care much about style and fine writing. The *Round Table* used to be once of a very superior class. It may be remembered that this journal was the one against which Mr. Charles Reade had a lawsuit for defamation of character, on account of a severe critique in its columns on *Griffith Gaunt*, in which the writer accused the author of immorality; and this lawsuit, instead of 'making' the paper—as might have been expected in America, the land of sensationalism—simply ruined it. The *Round Table*, while partaking of the characteristics of the *Saturday Review*, more strongly resembled the *Athenæum*; it was liberal in spirit and cosmopolitan, and was the most scholarly-written and purely literary serial ever produced in the States. It is now amalgamated with another weekly newspaper, the *Citizen*, which was also a tolerably fair journal; but, as is usual in such cases, the incorporation of the two has spoiled both. The *Nation*, the other principal weekly, is like our *Spectator*, and more political in its tendencies than the *Round Table* was, being of strong republican party bias; it displays much thought and refinement, although its articles are very bitter against any opponent of its extreme creed. *Harper's Illustrated Newspaper* is the *London News* of the States, and is published in New York, having an enormous circulation through the entire country, north and south. Prior to 1867, this journal used to transfer most of the woodcuts of its London namesake without much apology; but in that year it specially engaged Mr. Linton from England, in order to raise the tone of American wood-engraving, which was formerly very poor, until Mr. Linton's advent gave a fresh impetus to the art. Some of the productions of the artists of the empire city would now, however, bear comparison with the best of our own en-
"Wilkes' *Spirit of the Times*, a sporting journal, and the

New York Ledger—for which Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, the well-known Transatlantic Spurgeon, is said to have been paid a sum of a hundred thousand dollars for a serial story—are the only others worthy of mention. Amongst the remainder there are hundreds of one stamp, like the *London Journal* and *Family Herald*, though much inferior. All in all, it must be said that the French system of feuilletonism is the curse of the American press. In conclusion, it may be mentioned, that they have no real comic paper which makes humour its sole specialty. A very good imitation of our *Punch* was tried a few years ago, called *Vanity Fair*; but it succumbed after dragging on a miserable existence for a few months. The New Yorkers, as a rule, do not appreciate refined wit. Personality is usually esteemed the equivalent of satire; and obscenity, humour. Besides, nearly every paper is its own *Punch*, and contains columns of those deathly jokes which are sometimes seen under the head of 'Facetiæ' in our own serials, wherein they appear at intervals in company with sundry resuscitated Joe-Millerisms.

Taken as a whole, the low standard of the American press and its system of journalism is owing to many reasons, independent of the control of the newspaper proprietors and their editors. Mr. Richard Grant White, one of the ablest journalists of New York, in an analysis of the causes which lead to their inferiority, enters into the question in every way. He says: 'The failure of the native production, and the large and increasing demand for the imported article, *i.e.* English journals of note, taken together mean something. They are not mere accidents. The latter—nay, the former too—shows that the failure is not on account of a low standard of taste on the part of that particular portion of the public whose demands these papers undertake to supply; for, among persons qualified to judge, there can be no two opinions as to the very great superiority—until recently, at least, if not now—of the London papers in every respect. The failure hitherto on the part of the conductors of the weekly publications in question to produce papers of sufficient merit to interest permanently the public to which they were obliged to look for support, is, doubtless, the chief reason of their want of success. But there is another of almost equal importance, which is paramount in its operations, and the effect of which will, for a long time, be greater year by year. This is, the diffusion in America of cultivated readers over such a vast extent of territory.' The states north of the Potomac and Ohio possess about twenty millions of inhabitants—two-thirds nearly of the number in Great Britain; but whereas the latter are nearly all within about twelve hours' reach of London, or a little more, so that the London weekly paper printed on Friday night is distributed all over the kingdom by Saturday evening, a weekly paper published in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, and printed on Friday night, is not distributed in

Cincinnati, or south of Baltimore, until the beginning of the following week. Then it is not only 'last week's paper,' but it makes its appearance at the wrong time. Weekly papers are mostly read on Saturday afternoon and evening, and on Sunday. With Monday comes in the rush of the working week's affairs; and so in many cases, probably the majority, the high-class weekly lies over day after day, unread or half read, until it loses all its interest. From the lack of any real capital for the whole country—a real capital being a city which is a political, commercial, social, and literary centre—there is no authoritative circle of metropolitan society, no one public whose decision settles the fate of a book, of a singer, or of an orator. On the contrary, in America any one of these may be successful at Boston, be damned at Chicago, and die at Philadelphia a natural death, instead of the fiat in their case being decisive, as it would be in London. Consequently, there is no city from which the American people can think that everything excellent must come; and none, therefore, to which all who wish to be thought excellent must go. The society of the wealthiest and gayest cities of the Union, New York—one of the oldest, too—contains many admirable elements; but in its structure this society is as loose and flimsy as that of any raw 'half-baked' town beyond the prairies. And those towns, some of them, amid all their ruder social material, contain not a little of the best culture and education to be found in the country. There are many highly read and accomplished people whom failing fortunes or other motives of urgency have sent westwards, to grow with the west into health and strength. And between the limits of the new territories and the older states there are a far greater proportion of homes of educated people than could be imagined by a mere cursory traveller—people whose mental culture has made their taste exacting; and thus they will not be satisfied with the trumpery offspring of a second-rate press. If a really good weekly paper, published in New York, Philadelphia, or Boston, could be distributed to these people within twenty-four hours of its publication, a great number of them would be, doubtless, glad to get it. Moreover, if a paper as good, or about as good, were published at Cincinnati or St. Louis, or at any other neighbouring city, it would be taken in preference. The lack of freshness does not operate against the London papers, because, as Mr. White observes, they are looked upon as foreign luxuries, which must pass a certain number of days upon the seas; and what Dominie Sampson would call their 'timeous' articles—those upon the public affairs of the day—are those for which the Americans least prize them. The sketches of social and literary subjects, and the articles upon science and art, and general criticism of cosmopolitan politics, are the points which induce the citizens of the States to try and subscribe for the London papers; for upon all these subjects their articles are so perfectly

adapted to the Transatlantic public, and are so incomparably superior to those which heretofore have been published in the United States, that people who feel the craving for any such literary pabulum naturally would rather pay double for the imported article, than the price at which they were offered a very poor composition of home manufacture. As Mr. White says, 'Inferiority of home literature, wide diffusion of population, and the excellence and suitability of that which is provided by the press of the city which must be, as it has been for centuries, the literary metropolis of the English race, have therefore coöperated against the success in America of those very important literary enterprises—weekly reviews of politics, society, literature, and art.'

The reasons stated may account for the failure of weekly papers that mostly cultivate the *belles lettres*, but do not hold good with reference to the general journalism of the country, which is of an essentially low standard, both of morality and taste. With such grand names in the background as Prescott, Emerson, and Washington Irving, and living writers of the calibre of Longfellow, Motley, Holmes, and Lowell to the fore, it is surprising that the state of the ephemeral literature of the United States should be placed so low down in the literary scale, and not be made more fully to represent the enterprise and advancement of the American people.

JOHN CONROY HUTCHESON.

MY GRANDFATHER'S GHOST-STORY

I HAVE frequently heard the following marvellous story related by my grandfather as an actual episode in his life. I will give it, as nearly as I can remember, in his own words, leaving each reader to form his own opinion upon the incidents, without any commentary upon my part, farther than the statement, that my grandfather was a man whose veracity I had never any reason to doubt.

It was during a summer vacation that I met Karl Körner. I was reading hard for my degree; for having been somewhat idle and dissipated during the term, I found it necessary to spend what should have been my holiday among my books. For this purpose I pitched my tent at Bucksleigh, an ancient and romantic village in the New Forest. I was guided by several considerations in my choice of locality: first, it was a reasonable distance, even in those days, from London and Oxford; secondly, I was bitten about that time by an entomological mania, and here was the spot of all others for rare moths and butterflies; thirdly, a delightful and salubrious climate; and fourthly, not far away, near Stoney Cross, was the family seat of some college chums, whither, if books and butterflies became too monotonous, I could flee for a day or two's relaxation. These friends had very much pressed me to take up my abode wholly with them; but had I done so, I might as well have left Greek and Latin behind me, for all the use I should have made of them there; so I prudently declined, with the compromise I have mentioned.

The house I lodged in was at least as old as the Tudor days—pointed roof, overhanging stories, latticed windows, painted beams, dark oak staircases, panelled rooms, carved fireplaces, &c. It belonged to a family who had resided abroad for several years, and was let, during the summer months, in apartments to visitors. I had but one fellow-lodger when I first came to Bucksleigh, Karl Körner, a German, who, with his servant and the old woman who looked after the house, was, beside myself, its only inhabitant. From the first he curiously impressed me. In appearance he was the very beau-ideal of the mysterious German of romance. Long fair hair, blue eyes deeply sunken, pale hollow cheeks, a moody demeanour, and tall powerful figure—he might have been Charles Moor himself. In his habits he was reserved to moroseness. He had a weird way of talking to himself, and a strange trick of almost every moment casting sharp fearful glances over his shoulder, as though he fancied some unpleasant object were behind him. No one was suffered to

enter his apartments save his own servant, a dark saturnine-looking man, as mysterious as himself. I questioned Mrs. Adams, the housekeeper, as to who he was. But she was as much in the dark, and far more curious than myself respecting him. About two months before his arrival she had received a letter from her master, who was then residing in Germany, to say that a foreign gentleman would, in the course of a few weeks, arrive at Bucksleigh. The choice of apartments was to be given him; she was, in all respects, to attend to his wishes, and, above all, was to ask no questions. The time of his sojourn was uncertain: he might leave at any moment. This was all the information she possessed.

There was something about Körner that attracted, and yet repulsed me. The mystery that excited my curiosity may be ascribed to the first feeling; the dark sinister expression that sometimes mingled with the gloom upon his face to the second. I frequently saw him wandering about in the forest during my entomological rambles; but both in and out of the house he avoided an actual meeting.

We had been fellow-lodgers about a fortnight, when, without having previously exchanged a greeting, we became suddenly acquainted. It happened in this way. I had been out in the forest all the morning butterfly-hunting, and having captured in my net a splendid red admiral, two peacocks, and some smaller fry, I was lying basking in the shadow of a huge beech, gloating over my prey, when, happening to look up, I saw the German leaning against a tree, with his arms folded, and his eyes bent upon me. I had not heard his footfall upon the soft turf, and his sudden appearance quite startled me. Without a word of introduction, he threw himself upon the grass, and entered into conversation as freely as though we had been old acquaintances. He spoke English fluently, although with a strong foreign accent. I found him to be a man of highly-cultivated mind. Our topics were Greek, Latin, poetry, entomology, scenery; and upon all his remarks were equally just and full of knowledge. He grew warm and eloquent, his cheeks flush, his eye brightened, the whole man was transformed. Suddenly, without any warning, in the very midst of a speech, he stopped, his colour died out of his face, leaving a ghastly pallor in its place, while his eyes, full of horror, stared wildly upon vacancy. The change was so instantaneous, that for a moment I was struck speechless as himself, my eyes instinctively following the direction of his. I could see nothing but the waving branches of the tree and the bright sunlight. Before I had recovered my self-possession sufficiently to speak, he sprang to his feet and hurried away; the trees hid him from my sight, I saw him cast the old fearful look over his shoulder.

There was something about the incident that, in spite of the bright sunshine, gave me a strange superstitious feeling. After

long cogitation, I could come to only one conclusion, that the German was mad, and that his saturnine servant was his keeper.

A week passed away, and I saw no more of Körner, beyond a fleeting glance, as he passed my window on his way to the forest. In the mean time I had a visit from my college chums of a few miles off, to whom I related my German experiences, and thereby inflamed their imaginations with the most outrageous ideas. He was one of Schiller's robbers: Mephistopheles, a Werter, the wild huntsman, Salathiel, a banished count, and I know not what. Ensconced behind my window-curtains, they waited his passing to catch a glimpse of him, and the sight of his strange gloomy face made them almost seriously incline to those ideas that had been but jests before. The object of their visit was to induce me to go with them to a ball that was to come off in a fortnight at Southampton. But I heroically resisted all entreaties; so they left me to my studies in disgust.

Great was my surprise one evening, just as the twilight was closing in, at receiving this message from Mrs. Adams—'Would Mr. Serle honour Mr. Körner by his company, and sup with him that evening?' The old lady was all in a flutter, as she spoke the words. We exchanged looks. My curiosity was aroused to see the sanctorum that none had beheld, and I instantly accepted.

When I entered the room, I felt almost surprised to find that there was nothing peculiar in it, except that it was peculiarly comfortable. Although the weather was warm, a cheerful fire burned in the grate, and three large lamps illumined every part of the large sombre room.

'I like plenty of light,' he said, after cordially greeting me; 'I hate dark corners.'

So it seemed, I thought. Our conversation turned upon German literature, which the translations of Scott, Coleridge, and others, and the imitations of a host of English writers, was bringing into fashion. His mind was deeply impregnated with its mystic and metaphysical character. I found him to be a profound believer in the wildest dreams of the Rosicrucian and the demonologist. Our conversation had naturally, although almost imperceptibly, drifted into this channel, and I could not help remarking the strange forced manner in which he spoke upon the subject, as though compelled to talk of it by some occult power against his will. I ventured to be sceptical, and shall never forget the look with which he turned on me.

'Your philosophy,' he said bitterly, 'rejects all things that do not come within the scope of its narrow reasonings, regardless of the fact, that every object that exists contains within itself unsolvable mysteries. Of the nature of our own souls, of their condition or destination, after they are freed from their bodies, we know nothing. Can we conceive eternity? can we conceive illimitable space? Space before matter? the principles of our own being? We know these

things are, but we cannot bring them within the petty circle of our reason. In the face of these mighty mysteries, and of the yet mightier mysteries of the Christian faith, how dare man arrogantly assert that aught *cannot* be? One of your poets says, "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Wisdom is usually purchased at a bitter cost.'

There was something in his manner that deeply impressed me, and I would have continued the conversation, but he skilfully changed the subject, and we were soon deep in the discussion of the comparative merits of ancient and modern literature. In this agreeable discourse, aided by an excellent supper, some equally good wine and cigars, time glided on almost imperceptibly.

It was just upon the stroke of twelve when I wished him good-night. As I opened the door, I fancied I heard a sound like the rustling of a woman's dress. Thinking it was Mrs. Adams, who was the only female in the house, coming up to speak to me, I turned my head; but there was no one upon the landing or on the staircase. The sound passed me, and there was a flutter in the air, as though it were disturbed by some moving body. Following its supposed direction, my eyes fell upon Körner. In a few seconds a ghastly change had fallen upon him. His face was deadly pale, his eyes fixed with a look of horror, his hands convulsively clutching the arms of the chair upon which he sat. I was advancing to him, thinking he was ill, when a hand laid upon my shoulder held me back. I turned, and saw the German servant, who by word and gesture requested my absence. The next moment I found myself outside the door, and heard the key turned in the lock.

A week elapsed, during which Körner and I never once met. I had been hard at my books, had completely shaken off my late superstitious terrors, retaken to scepticism, and had thoroughly made up my mind that the German was the victim of some painful disease, of which I had witnessed the paroxysms.

It was the night of the ball, which I have before mentioned. I had had a letter from my friends that morning, as a last persuader, to meet them at Southampton, and accompany them to the ball. But I heeded not the voice of the charmer, and was farther strengthened in my virtuous resolution by the weather, which, uncertain for several days past, towards the evening in question assumed a most savage aspect: the rain descended in torrents, the wind blew a hurricane, and there were distant mutterings in the air that portended a thunder-storm. As I looked round my gloomy room, in the fading light, I could not help picturing with a sigh the brilliant ball-room at Southampton.

While thus meditating, there was a knock at my door. Before I could answer it, Körner stood before me. Even in the twilight I could perceive that his air was excited with a kind of forced gaiety.

'How horribly dull you are here !' he cried. 'Come up to my room ; I have a cheerful fire and plenty of light, a bottle of good wine, an irreproachable cigar, and Mrs. Adams is preparing an appetising little supper.'

Now, after my one experience, I did not much care about passing the evening with Körner, so I began a polite apology about the necessity of study. But he impatiently interrupted me :

'Pshaw, man ! it is the last opportunity you will have of refusing me.'

'Are you going to leave us, then ?' I inquired.

'Yes ; my release is at hand, and I wish you to join me in celebrating it.'

'Your release !' I reiterated.

'Yes ; but we will not talk of it to-night ; you will hear all about it to-morrow,' he answered lightly.

After that I could not refuse his invitation.

There was a strangeness in his manner that I could not understand, which impressed me disagreeably. He was as gay as a Frenchman ; he laughed, told anecdotes and doubtful adventures, sang German student songs, and was so unlike himself, as I had previously known him, that at times I had serious doubts whether I was waking or dreaming.

'I astonish you,' he cried. 'I have cast aside what you call the blue devils for to-night, and, as Shakespeare says, "Richard's himself again :"' what I was in my old student days, the merriest fellow within the walls of Bonn.'

But I did not like his merriment—it was to me far more depressing than his gloom. I drank his hock, I smoked his cigars, and I laughed at his stories ; but I felt all the time like one oppressed by a nightmare, and would have been delighted to have found an excuse to get down quietly to my own room.

In the mean time the storm was raging violently, the rain dashing in sheets against the windows, and we could hear the crash and moan of the forest as the wind rushed through the trees ; and the thunder, nearing, though still distant, rolled sullenly through the air.

'A pleasant night for a journey !' he cried, in the light jesting tone he had assumed throughout the evening.

'You are not going a journey to-night ?' I said.

'No ; but Fritz has gone. I shall not start upon my journey till to-morrow morning—a far longer one than Fritz's.'

I shuddered, I knew not why.

'Now, my friend, it is time that we separate,' he said suddenly, rising, and holding out his hand.

The intimation was sudden, and not strictly polite ; but I took the hint with the most cheerful alacrity.

'Pardon my abruptness, but I must now prepare for my journey.'

An odd time, I thought, to begin preparations for a journey. As I wished him good-night, I heard the rustling as of a woman's dress behind me, felt a movement in the air, and the sensation of a passing body, just as on my previous visit, and on Körner's face fell the same ghastly look. My nervous system was highly wrought, whether by the shadow of coming events, or by the electricity of the atmosphere, I know not; and without another word I hurried out of the room. As before, I heard the key turned in the lock; but, as before, I did not hurry down to my own room, for my limbs trembled so violently, and my head felt so dizzy, that I was obliged to lean against the wall for a moment, for fear of falling.

The tempest had reached its culminating point. The thunder-clouds were upon us, and sent forth peal upon peal till the house trembled and shook as though swayed by an earthquake; the lightning flashed in sheets, and in streams of jagged fire, now blue as steel, now luridly red; the rain had abated, but the wind, rushing through the forest-leaves, sounded as though a furious mountain torrent or a roaring sea was coming down upon us; while the branches crashed, and groaned, and shrieked, as the hurricane swayed and broke and hurled them one against another. Never have I heard so awful a contention of the elements. I can never recall the memory of that terrible night without a shudder. And there I stood in the full blaze of the lightning, as it shone through the staircase window, with the fascination of terror upon me.

Suddenly through the din of the storm there rose a sharp wailing cry, that curdled my blood and bristled my hair. It came from the room I had just left. By a sudden impulse, which I could never explain, I resolved to try and solve the awful mystery that was about me. There was but one way. Across the front of the house ran a narrow balcony. The window I was standing against was in a line with those of Körner's room. With the rain beating down upon my bare head, and the wind sweeping round me and almost lifting me off my feet, I crept on to this balcony, and between an opening in the curtains peered into Körner's room. And this is what I saw.

The room was blazing with light, just as I had left it. With his back towards me, quivering and crouching, was the form of Körner; facing the window, and looking into his face, stood a woman. Her dress was that of middle-class German life, but her face was the most lovely I ever beheld; the hair was of the brightest, rarest yellow, the complexion faultlessly pure; the eyes large, dreamy, and of a deep violet; the nose and mouth of the most perfect shape. While I gazed, fascinated by her extraordinary beauty, a hideous transformation took place before my eyes. The clothes faded from her form, her beauty melted away like a vapour, and in its place my horrified gaze was fastened on a skeleton, on a grinning loathsome skull, out of whose mouldering recesses crawled bloated obscene

worms. The vision was but of a second's duration, and then I saw the bones crumble before my eyes, and the skull totter and fall.

I saw no more. A mist gathered before my eyes, and the sickness of death overpowered me; but as I fell I heard a loud explosion, which sounded unlike the thunder that a moment afterwards mingled with its echoes.

When sense returned, I found myself lying upon the pavement of the balcony, saturated with rain, and cold as ice. The morning was just breaking; the storm had cleared away, all but the wind, which still blew hard, but in fitful dying gusts. With a dazed brain, upon which still lingered the dark shadow of the horrors I had witnessed, but no substantial idea, I mechanically sought my own apartments, and in the same automaton fashion swallowed a large glass of brandy, undressed, got into bed, and without any farther recollection fell fast asleep.

I was awakened by a sudden shock, and the sound of loud laughter. When I opened my eyes, I found myself upon the floor, and my friends from Stony Cross standing over me, convulsed with laughter, at, I presume, my ridiculous and scared appearance. In returning from Southampton, they had come several miles out of their way to pay me a visit. Upon hearing I had not risen, heated with champagne, and ready for any mischief, they entered my room, lifted me out of bed in my sheet, and bumped me not very gently upon the ground.

We had just sat down to breakfast when Mrs. Adams put her head in at the door, and beckoned me out mysteriously. 'I beg your pardon, sir, for interrupting you, but I am so uneasy about Mr. Körner that I couldn't contain myself any longer.'

'What is the matter?' I asked in great agitation.

'Well, you know he is an early riser, never in bed after six. It is now ten, and I have neither seen nor heard him. I have knocked at his door, and can get no answer.'

'Where is the servant Fritz?' I inquired.

'He went away yesterday, saying he should not return for some days, and that I was to attend upon his master in the mean while.'

I told her to wait until after breakfast, and I would see what could be done. All the horrors of the last night came vividly back upon my memory, filling me with evil forebodings. It was impossible to conceal my perturbation from my friends; and after a very little pressing, I told them of the housekeeper's fears, and certain of my own experiences; omitting all mention of what I had seen through the window, which would have excited only their ridicule.

The breakfast-table was abandoned; and while I proceeded to the German's chamber, the others waited the result at the farther end of the corridor. No answer was returned to my knock, and after a little hesitation we decided to send for a locksmith, and make

a forcible entry. No one thought of entering by the windows, and I dared not propose it; I could not for my life have looked through them again. In a very short time the lock was taken off, and the door thrown open. The room was darkened by the curtains, save in one spot, where the sunbeams streamed through an opening, and fell full and brightly upon an awful object—the upturned blood-bespattered face of the German. He was quite dead; his hand still grasped a discharged pistol—he had blown his brains out.

I need scarcely remark that I did not pass another night under that ill-omened roof, but at once accepted my friends' invitation to return home with them.

Of course you are now anxious to know the explanation of the mysterious spectre and all other mysteries. All that I can tell you upon the subject was gathered more from inferences than from direct information. In Körner's writing-desk was found the miniature of a lovely girl, which I immediately recognised as the face I had seen in my vision; and beside it was a strange and horrible letter, of which I made a copy at the time, and which, as nearly as I can remember, ran thus:

'When you read these lines I shall be no more. Living, I am powerless to avenge your wickedness to me; but if there is a just God, my revenge will reach you from the grave. I have prayed unceasingly to be directed to a retribution as awful as the misery you have brought upon me. My prayer has been heard, and, *mark me*, scoff as you will in your sceptical conceit, it will come to pass. In my dark hours of despairing agony, this is the vengeance I have engendered, and which I *will* execute. From the hour in which I draw my last breath I will haunt you. Fly to the furthestmost extremities of the world, and my shadow shall still pursue you; alone or in a crowd, in the darkness of the night or in the brightest sunshine, you shall know no moment of your life in which I may not stand before you. And lest habit should in time dull the horror of my presence to your hard godless soul, in each visitation you shall behold the progress of the corruption of the buried body as it festers in the earth. As the body is at the moment I stand before you, in that guise shall you see me. And when the last stage is reached, when the bones crumble into dust, then shall thy earthly career close. Pray, then, if you can, that the tortures you will endure in this life may mitigate those prepared for you in the next.'

Putting together the little information I gathered at various times, chiefly through Mrs. Adams, I framed this story. At Bonn there lived one Adeline Sturm, a burgomaster's daughter. She was the beauty of the town, had been educated far above her station, and was as notorious for her haughty and disdainful pride as for her personal charms. All the young men were madly in love with her, but upon all she looked down with equal scorn. Karl Körner was at

that time a student at the University. He was a scion of a noble family, strikingly handsome, heir to a fine fortune, and the most heartless libertine in Bonn. The stories he was continually hearing of this girl's unimpressible nature excited his pique, and over a debauch he laid a heavy wager with a fellow-student that he would win her love, degrade her pride, and abandon her. He succeeded too well in all that he proposed. It was an act of monstrous villainy; for he had not even the excuse of passion for accomplishing Adeline's ruin, while she loved him with all the fervour of her proud powerful nature. Upon discovering the conspiracy of which she had been made the victim, she took poison. From that time Körner was accursed; he wandered from land to land, from one division of the globe to another, but nowhere finding peace or rest.

A sceptical friend has suggested that the letter worked its object without any supernatural intervention. Written under such awful circumstances, under so powerful a conviction that it would be given to her to execute her implacable will, it worked upon the guilty conscience of her betrayer until his diseased imagination, constantly brooding upon its terrible suggestions, created for itself the very horrors threatened. In regard to my share in the illusion, his theory is this: 'From the first, Körner impressed your mind with a sense of the abnormal and the mysterious. His behaviour in the forest gave a form to what had been before intangible, by suggesting the idea that he was haunted by some ghastly vision. The next stage in the mental process was reached on the occasion of your first visit to his apartments. The cold air, rushing through the open door and mingling with the overheated atmosphere within, rustled among some unseen objects, and suggested to your excited imagination that the Thing was about you, and from the nature of a sound, suggested a female apparition. Upon Körner's face you saw your own impressions reflected, but in his case intensified by a visual illusion. On the occasion of your last visit, every circumstance favoured the exquisitely-sensitive condition of your organs. There was a terrible storm raging; the air was charged with electricity—a most important point; when you looked through that window, Reason had entirely vacated her throne. You were utterly under the spell, and by one of those curious mental phenomena of whose occasional occurrence we have undoubted proof, the horrible illusion of Körner, intensified to an immeasurable degree by the agony of coming death, communicated itself to your mind, thus causing your vision to be similarly impressed.'

Very ingenious indeed, I tell him, but a good deal of Bishop Berkeley's metaphysics about it. There is a vast difference between dreaming that you are burned and the actual sensation.

ENTHUSIASM *v.* IMPEDIMENT

BY HENRY LAKE

'Poor devil!' Such was the laconic sentiment of pity expressed lately by a man of experience when he heard that his friend had taken out a patent.

Few of our readers, while in the enjoyment of the various comforts and appliances of daily life, are at all aware, not alone of the difficulties which attended their introduction, but of the absolute impediments which were put in their way. The intensity of these impediments has been frequently, though by no means entirely, dependent upon ignorance and selfishness. Vested interests, however, have been scarcely more powerful in their antagonism than crass stupidity. An invention or an improvement is to many even now as a red rag to a bull—a thing to be resisted by all means; and if a man wish to be at war with a fair section of humanity, he could scarcely more readily attain his desires than by becoming an inventor. The Patent-office could claim as many victims as the Court of Chancery, and the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick has its records equally disfigured by hopeful hearts bowed down by the misery and torture of delay. To have a patent has become synonymous in many minds with having a 'white elephant.'

We are not speaking of those multitudinous registrations of useless inventions in the Patent-office, but of really useful scientific discoveries, which have ere this, or will one day, become adopted and valued, but, unless the inventor be endowed with enthusiasm sufficiently powerful to surmount all difficulties and to endure all delays, only when his family is ruined and he broken-hearted.

There are a few exceptions, but they are very few. A great improvement of some machinery in constant use readily meets its reward, especially if it be economical in its operation. Show a manufacturer that he can make pounds by expending shillings, and you will not have long to wait for his adoption of your idea. But woe to that man whose invention suggests radical changes; for against him is raised at once the many-headed hydra goaded on by ignorance and vested interest.

Money, which is all-powerful in the world usually, is comparatively of little avail here: the delay caused by opposition would break the Mint. Enthusiasm is the power which alone has overleaped all impediments, whether the antagonism were derived from ignorance, interest, or that weapon born of or adopted by both, ridicule.

It is well for all opponents of improvements to remember that all things human come to their climax, and then decay. They serve their turn in their time; but it is the fate of everything in the universe to be superseded when no longer useful, and it is the privilege of every great inventor to create a state of things that did not previously exist. Watchmen were thought to be the very perfection of surveillance, and undoubtedly they worked a wonderful improvement in the lawlessness of the streets; but they were swept out of the way, and superseded by the police. Yet, again, the police have so sharpened men's wits in the matter of knavery, that the police-force is proved to be insufficient, while to return to watchmen would be to return to a condition in which no man's goods or even life would be safe for a moment.

Oil-lamps had just been improved to a certain extent when they were superseded by gas; but gas has evoked a habit of life that to return to oil would be impossible. Life and the present work of the world would be brought to a perfect standstill.

One of the greatest privations suffered by beleaguered Paris was the loss of gas light. Meat may be supplemented by flesh of horse, ass, mule, dog, cat, or rat; but *triste comme un bonnet de nuit* was the gay Parisians' idea of the time of darkness; and if they could now name a privation which would be regarded by them as the greatest, it would be want of gas. Yet it is in the remembrance of many now living, when the proposed introduction of this artificial light, which was destined soon to supersede the old oil-lamps of the street, to light up our houses and railways, and even to be impressed into the culinary department, was met with the most determined opposition. Lord mayors and aldermen, ministers of state and M.P.'s, vestries and tradespeople, joined their antagonisms; while, amongst many learned objections, may be mentioned the ridicule of Sir Walter Scott, who jeered at those 'who proposed to light London with a slice from the moon.' But at length the enthusiasts, who worked steadily on, fighting up to the very night when one side of one street—Pall Mall, we believe—was mysteriously illumined, were triumphant; though the people stood affrighted on the other side of the road, expecting the utter failure of the proposal, or such an explosion as would for ever put an end to so 'chimerical an illusion.'

Our younger readers, who now revel in the facility for correspondence afforded by penny postage, would little dream of the opposition against which Sir Rowland Hill had to battle ere, in 1840, the boon was given. In 1838 the charge for postage averaged sevenpence-halfpenny for a single letter; while any, the simplest, enclosure, even of an inch of paper, made it a 'double letter' liable to double postage. Envelopes at that time were unknown, save to the members of either House, who franked them up to the height of their privilege. The Post-office revenue had remained nearly stationary dur-

ing the preceding twenty years, notwithstanding the vast increase during that period both of the population and of the facility of intercourse between the different parts of the empire. Yet, in the face of this, the fight of Sir Rowland Hill was won bit by bit, till, though letters are carried at less than one-seventh of the cost to the public, and the expenses of the establishment are more than double what they were under the old system, the Post-office nets a revenue of almost a million and a half sterling, after paying all costs and charges.

The enormous figures which attest the progress of correspondence in the country are calculated to surprise those who so coolly receive their daily letters.

The total number of letters delivered in 1870 in the United Kingdom was 831,914,000; an increase of about 30,000,000 on the previous year. Indeed 30,000,000 may be regarded as the annual increase on these already astounding figures. Of these letters nearly 4,000,000 were returned, and they were thus disposed of: nearly 3,000,000 were restored to the writers; upwards of 100,000 were re-issued to 'corrected addresses' (showing the care of the Post-office in amending the errors or carelessness of the writers); and upwards of 200,000 were destroyed, in utter hopelessness of finding the owners. It is very suggestive to find that nearly 15,000 letters were posted without any address at all, and, more strange still, that 256 of these contained money to the aggregate of 2,810*l.* The gross number of letters, divided by the population and the inhabited houses, gives an average of twenty-six letters to each person, and 149 to each house.

Closely allied with the Post-office proper, and scarcely less interesting to many, is the Post-office Savings-Bank; but it took not only fifty-five years, but the loss of much money, to secure the adoption of its unquestionable advantage. In 1806, a bill for the transfer of savings-banks to government was introduced by Mr. Whitbread, which was much opposed, and eventually thrown out on its second reading. The idea was frequently talked of afterwards, but always crushed, until in 1860, in consequence of numerous savings-bank failures, Mr. Pikes of Huddersfield wrote a convincing pamphlet on the subject. A plan was then prepared by Mr. George Chetwynd, the present receiver and accountant-general of the Post-office, on which a bill was founded, and, being carried in 1861, the system was matured and worked out by Mr. Chetwynd in combination with Mr. Scudamore, whose name has since become identified with the telegraph system. The bill had no easy time of it, however, and it had many a narrow escape before it became an Act. All the savings-banks in the kingdom opposed it, and members were roused to vehement opposition by local constituencies.

The adoption of savings-banks by the government has met with the most signal success. The banks are increased from 2,500 to up-

wards of 4,000; the depositors from 639,000 to nearly 2,000,000; and the amount of money deposited from 2,000,000*l.* to nearly 6,000,000*l.*, while the cost is below the original parliamentary estimate.

Cheapness and facility have, then, created a necessity for intercommunication; and the postman, instead of being, as at one time, a stranger to many, is a diurnal visitor at nearly every door. Disarrange this system, take away the boon that has been thus conferred, and those who knew not what it was to receive a letter before 1840 would be the first to resent the aggression.

Any attempted alteration in the carrying system of the country appears to have been always the signal for the most vehement opposition from all classes.

In 1669 the first attempt was made to establish a coach system. A coach had been built by the Earl of Rutland nearly a hundred years before; but it was merely for family use, and was as heavy and lumbering as a van. In 1669, however, the proprietors of a 'flying coach' undertook to perform the journey from Oxford to London 'between the rising and setting of the sun.' At six in the morning the coach left All Souls' College, and at seven in the evening the bold adventurers arrived safely in London.

This coach ceased to run in the dark days of winter, the road being infested by robbers after nightfall; but its success caused half a dozen more to be established. The public mind, however, was set against them, and all promises of improved swiftness were jeered at, and regarded as dangerous or impossible. It was said by Sir Henry Herbert, a member of the House of Commons, in 1671: 'If a man were to propose to convey us regularly to Edinburgh in coaches in seven days, and bring us back in seven days more, should we not vote him to Bedlam? or if another were to assert he would sail to the East Indies in six months, should we not punish him for practising on our credulity?' And yet, absurd as these words sound to us, Sir Henry most probably represented the real feeling of the whole country at the time.

The Duke of Bridgewater in 1758 obtained an act of parliament for power to construct a canal. This, however, has been ascribed to others, but the only previous idea was to make use of existing rivers and render them navigable. It was Francis Duke of Bridgewater who first conceived the idea of cutting a canal through solid land. With the Duke were associated James Brindley, a clever and enthusiastic man, and John Gilbert, whose mania was for mines and mechanics.

Public opinion went dead against the Duke. The people declared him insane, and denounced Mr. Brindley as 'a penniless theorist;' and when the great engineer proposed to build his aqueduct thirty-nine feet above the river Irwell, it was generally considered

that a madhouse was the proper location of such a man. 'Meanwhile the Duke limited his personal expenses to 400*l.* per annum, while John Gilbert showed the method of his madness: went about the country borrowing money on all sorts of security; was well known on the Liverpool Exchange, where the Duke's bill for 500*l.* could with difficulty be cashed; was a weekly visitor among the farmers in the neighbouring districts, borrowing such small sums as they could spare, forestalling the rental of the Duke's tenants, and appealing in the greatness of the ducal name for the support of that which was popularly known as the Duke's folly.'

The hour of triumph arrived: the work was a great success; and even the scientific scoffers became loud in their praises of the undertaking.

When the Duke conceived this great design, the price of river-carriage between Manchester and Liverpool was twelve shillings a ton, and land-carriage forty shillings a ton. By the Duke's act, the charge was limited by statute to six shillings. The whole district was at once benefited. The canal became the great highway for raw material and manufactured goods, coals, lime, manure; while the markets of Manchester were supplied, and the inhabitants enabled to travel most pleasantly along the canal, which had been the object of their sneers during the whole time of its formation.

The usual result ensued. The great canal was soon followed by others, in which the Duke and Mr. Brindley bore part, though many were proposed which were not required. But the new mode of investment was anxiously sought for, until a perfect mania arose in 1790, when the windows of inns where the contractors were staying were forced, and agriculturists were roving about at midnight to procure shares. But by the unwearied energy of the brave Duke 2400 miles of canal were made; and the dividends paid on these undertakings have been from 6 to 30 per cent.

When George Stephenson was introducing his locomotive, he stated to Mr. Thornycroft that his utmost expectations were limited to twelve or fourteen miles an hour; and yet, if it had not been for the enthusiasm of men devoted to the development of one idea, the opposition in every conceivable form must have overpowered, or at least delayed, the great blessing of railways. There was one exception, which was the Duke of Bridgewater, who exhibited the same spirit of forethought as he had shown regarding his own canals. 'The canals,' he said, 'will last my time; but I see mischief in these — tramroads.'

One Thomas Gray was now the monomaniac whose enthusiasm gave no pause in forcing forward the great idea. In 1820 and 1821 he memorialised Lord Sidmouth; in 1822 he sent five separate petitions to ministers of state; in 1823 he again addressed the ministers; in 1824 he petitioned the Lord Mayor and Corporation of

London. But from all these he met with little or no practical attention. He was looked upon by the thinking part of the community as a clever curious man, who, having no capital of his own, was willing to employ the capital of others for his own benefit.

Mr. Howitt, who resided at the same time as Gray in Nottingham, speaks of Gray's one idea as a whimsical crotchety which had for years completely taken possession of and absorbed his whole mind; that it was the one great and incessant subject of his thoughts and conversation; that, begin when you would, on whatever subject—the weather, the news, the political movements of the day—it would not be many minutes before, with Thomas Gray, you would be enveloped with steam, listening to a harangue on a general iron railway. Of course, Gray was looked upon as little better than a madman, a crotchety fellow, a dreamer, a builder of castles in the air, one of a race of discoverers of the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone, or perpetual motion. With one consent he was voted an intolerable bore.

Mr. Howitt thus describes his first meeting: 'Thomas Gray and myself came in contact, and sure enough he soon broke out on this railway topic. Visions of railways running all over the kingdom, conveying thousands of people and hundreds of thousands of tons of goods at a good round trot; coaches and coachmen annihilated; canals covered with duck-weed; enormous fortunes made by good speculations being talked of as sober realities that were to be.'

Notwithstanding all this opposition and ridicule, at length the prospectus was issued for the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, and Mr. George Stephenson was employed to make the survey. But when application was made to the House of Commons for a bill, it was met by the most determined opposition. Every clause was opposed; every fallacy was again repeated; facts were misstated, and falsehoods roundly asserted for facts. Then the country was roused. The country gentleman was told that the smoke would kill his birds as they passed over the locomotive. It was argued that the weight of the engine would prevent its moving; that the sparks from the engine would destroy all the property through which it passed. Passengers would be hurled to destruction; supposing their limbs were spared, they would be unable to breathe in carriages travelling at such a rate. The race of horses was to be extinguished, and foxes and pheasants were to cease for ever amongst us. The corporations of Leeds, Liverpool, and Birmingham called upon the landed proprietors—the very interest their predecessors had opposed—to place every opposition to the railways wherever contemplated.

The staid and prescient *Quarterly Review* may be considered to sum up the general opinion of the press in an article written in 1825, from which we extract the following, which reads very grotesquely by the light of our present experience:

'The gross exaggeration of the powers of the locomotive steam-engine, or, to speak more plainly, the steam-carriage, may delude for a time, but must end in the mortification of those concerned. . . It is certainly some consolation to those who are to be whirled at the rate of eighteen or twenty miles an hour, by means of the high-pressure engine, to be told that they are in no danger of being seasick while they are on shore; that they are not to be scalded to death nor drowned by the bursting of the boiler; and that they need not mind being shot by the scattered fragments, or dashed in pieces by the flying off or the breaking of a wheel. But with all these assurances, we should as soon expect the people of Woolwich to suffer themselves to be fired off by one of Congreve's ricochet rockets as trust themselves to the mercy of such a machine going at such a rate. We will back old Father Thames against the railway for any sum.'

It was not, however, only the prejudices of disbelievers that enthusiasm had to overcome; even those who were advocates of the new system were so nervous of expressing their own hopefulness, that they did almost as much harm as their opponents. For instance: 'It is far from my wish,' said Mr. Nicholas Wood, an advocate for the railway, 'to promulgate to the world that the ridiculous expectations, or rather professions, of the enthusiast speculator will be realised, and that we shall see engines travelling at the rate of twelve, sixteen, eighteen, or twenty miles an hour. Nothing could do more harm towards their general adoption and improvement than the promulgation of such pernicious nonsense.' Scientific men generally denounced railroads as 'wild and visionary.' Poets, even the greatest of the age, discharged their batteries. Southey spoke disparagingly, and Wordsworth poured forth his indignation on the iron way in a sonnet.

When the bill at last got into committee in the House of Commons, satire and argument were alike brought to bear. The locomotive was laughed at, and the Liverpool Exchange denounced for abetting 'so preposterous a plan.' 'It was the most absurd scheme that ever entered the head of man.' A landed proprietor 'would sooner give 10,000*l.* than have the steam-engines come puffing near him.' 'If,' said another, 'this railroad be made, we must quit the place where we have lived so long and happily; we must leave it, we must go away.' Vegetation was to cease wherever the locomotive passed; the value of land was to be lowered in its vicinity; the market-gardener was to be ruined; steam would vanish before storm and frost; property near a station would be destroyed. 'The wind, if higher than usual, would prevent it from running; the rain would stop it, the snow would upset it.' The scheme was based on deception and fallacy. They would not go 'so fast as the canal nor so safe as the coach. The engine would burst, and the wheels

would fly off.' As to Mr. Stephenson, it is related that the farmers attacked him in force. They charged him with having in his survey trodden down 'the corn of widows,' and with destroying the crops of the market-gardeners. He was threatened by peers, and attempted 'to be ducked' by commoners. So timid were even those directly interested, that his directors implored him not to express his opinion fully; and when, in deference to their request, he suggested a speed of eight miles an hour with ten tons, and four miles an hour with twenty tons, the committee deemed him mad, the counsel ridiculed him, and he was 'sneered at as a visionary, and pitied as a lunatic.' After thirty-seven days' discussion the first two clauses were negatived—the bill was thrown out. The enthusiasts, however, were not to be put down. A new survey was made, a new bill was brought in; and this time with success, although honourable members expressed their opinion that the railroad would be 'the greatest nuisance, the most complete disturbance of quiet and comfort in all parts of the kingdom, that the ingenuity of man could invent.'

The triumph of the new system was complete when Stephenson's 'Rocket' engine, with which the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, ran twenty-nine miles in the hour, and which had for its driver the man who afterwards built the Crystal Palace—Charles Fox.

It is strange that at this time nearly every trunk-line that we now possess was projected, and all met with more or less furious opposition. The London and Birmingham was nearly defeated, and a dinner, presided over by the Marquis of Chandos, was actually held to celebrate the defeat of the Great Western. How little did the marquis dream that his own son would ere long be the chairman of the greatest line in the kingdom!

But as to the Great Western, Eton College opposed it because it would be 'injurious to the interests of the school, and dangerous to the morals of the pupils.' Windsor argued that the water in the Thames would be decreased, and the supply for Windsor Castle would be destroyed. Nor was Oxford behind in its desire that the railway might be kept far from its sacred precincts. But in spite of colleges demurring, and the privacy of Windsor being destroyed, and the Eton scholars demoralised, the bill was passed by the end of the session of 1835.

The parliamentary expenses of the five competing lines from London to Brighton appear almost incredible. Rennie's line cost in parliamentary expenses alone 72,000*l.*; Stephenson's, 53,750*l.*; Cundy's, 16,500*l.*; Gibbs's, 26,325*l.*; South Eastern, 25,000*l.*; making a total of 193,575*l.*

Then came a lull. Money was plentiful, and the success of the railways already formed had been great. Fresh lines in every direc-

tion were proposed, many of them chimerical, while many were competing lines, until all culminated in the great railway mania when the enthusiasm of the inventor was adopted by the public. The railway mania, however, was not an unmixed evil. For without where would have been the railway communication which now intersects the country in every direction?

Electric telegraphs and railways must now be considered inseparable, and without the one the modern system of travelling would be impossible. It might have been supposed that an unmixed good like the electric telegraph would have excited no opposition. It is true that vested interests were not opposed to it; but the *vis inertiae* of incredulity and ridicule supplied the want of other opposition. The late Professor Barlow of the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, demonstrated that electrical currents were so much weakened by passing through wires of even moderate length, that it would be impossible to turn electricity to any practical account. Doubtless the professor took it for granted that his theory was very clever and very accurate, but the authority of his name and reputation was such, that the electric telegraph was retarded some fifteen or twenty years.

The Electric Telegraph Company, which afterwards became prosperous, at first experienced great losses, and at length became hopelessly insolvent, as people had predicted; and probably the idea would have been abandoned, but for the undying enthusiasm of a few friends, including the honoured names of Stephenson, Ricardo and Brassey, who helped the company over its difficulties, and established a system which has now, thanks to Mr. Scudamore, been taken under imperial guidance.

The experience of the past, however, brought no immunity to inventors of farther improvements.

Before we part with the latest and grandest creation of human ingenuity, it may be well to pause and reflect, while the incipient of the railway period is fresh in our recollection, on the wonderful climax at which we have arrived in railway formation. The railway engine can travel more than sixty miles an hour. It runs up hills almost as readily as on level ground. We cross a whole continent as by the wonderful stretch of railway across the Isthmus of Panama; or we bore through the solid mountain, as in Mont Cenis; or adopt the sewer system, and rush about like rats underground. A new profession has arisen in the person of the contractor, and the greatest and grandest of this profession, Mr. Brassey, who has lately passed away after a busy life almost entirely devoted to railway works, leaves behind him the colossal fortune of seven millions of money to tell of the greatness of the railway as an institution, and the indomitable courage and perseverance of the man.

THEORIA

[A certain philosopher spent thirty years of his life in the contemplation of one star. When he had satisfied himself as to its orbit, he devoted himself to works of charity for a year, and then died.]

I.

My task is o'er, my all-absorbing task ;
Now may I taste the fruits of years of thought ;
Now look for rest, for 'tis not fame I ask,
And turn to man, whose good I ever sought.

II.

In thee hath been my daily joy, my Star,
To trace the progress of thy gentle light ;
To watch thy motion as thou circlest far,
And shinest glorious through the silent night.

III.

When first the object of my life I set
The laws that guide thy orbit to pronounce,
I had not learned thy high pleasures yet,
Nor knew earth's lower offerings to renounce.

IV.

For I was young—the young are prone to love ;
And I was strong—the strong are quick to hate ;
And all the other passions which can move
Man's life within me burn'd insatiate.

V.

But as I work'd, and watch'd, and knew thee more,
Each energy grew quieter in me,
And much was strengthen'd which was weak before,
And much was weaken'd which so ought to be.

VI.

And more and more from the world's strife removed,
I rose still higher o'er the outer throng,
Till I knew thee ; and knowing thee, I loved
The law that ruled thee, pure, and firm, and strong.

VII.

Though even such is based on one more high,
Itself inferior to a greater end ;
Till over all is the dread Deity,
Nature's great God, man's most enduring Friend.

VIII.

So grew my soul expansive, half in awe
And half in love for that great Power supreme,
Offsprings of which are right, and truth, and law,
Who ruleth all the realms that be or seem.

IX.

Thus labouring, have I gradually spurn'd
The gnawing doubts which once my bosom rent ;
Have chill'd the passions with which once I burn'd,
And found my life not for myself misspent.

X.

Nor all misspent for others : they who roam
Unguided erst o'er the wide pathless sea,
Led by thy light, shall steer their prow to home,
And bless my long communion with thee.

EDMUND COURTENAY.

BELGRAVIA

APRIL 1872

TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER X. MR. WALGRAVE IS SATISFIED WITH HIMSELF.

THE ten A.M. express whisked Mr. Walgrave up to town in something less than an hour. The fair Kentish landscape shot past the carriage window, little by little losing its charm of rural seclusion, growing suburban, dotted thickly and more thickly with villas, here newly whitened stucco of the rustic Italian style, there fresh red-brick of severely gothic design; for oaks came laurels, for mighty beeches of half a dozen centuries' growth monkey trees planted the day before yesterday; every house had its glittering conservatory, trim lawn, and geometrical flower-beds, all ablaze with Tom Thumb geraniums and calceolaria; everywhere the same aspect of commonplace British prosperity. Then the bright well-ordered suburb melted into the crowded southern fringe of the great town. The air became flavoured with soap-boiling, tallow, new boots—on the right hand a far-off odour of cordage and tar from Deptford; on the left, the dismal swamps of Bermondsey. Then a clang and a clatter, a shrieking and puffing, and jerking and snorting; a stoppage or two—apparently purposeless—and, lo, Mr. Walgrave was at the London-bridge Station; and it seemed to him as if Grace Redmayne, and the life that he had been living for the last few weeks, could scarcely belong to such a world as this. It was a dreary awakening from a delicious dream.

He called a cab—a four-wheeler—since he had the responsibility of his luggage, and no one but himself to take charge of it, and drove through the grimy miry streets. Even at this dearest period of the year the City was noisy with traffic, and full of life and motion;

but O, what a dismal kind of life after the yellowing corn-fields, studded with gaudy field flowers, and the rapturous music of the lark, invisible in the empyrean!

'O, to be a country squire with twenty thousand a year,' he thought, 'and to live my own life! to marry Grace Redmayne, and dawdle away my harmless days riding round my estate; to superintend the felling of a tree or the levelling of a hedge; to lie stretched on the grass at sunset with my head on my wife's lap, my cigar-case and a bottle of claret on the rustic table beside me; to have the renown that goes with a good old name and a handsome income; and to have nothing to wrestle for, no prize to pluck from the slow-growing tree that bears the sour fruit of worldly success—sour to the man who fails to reach it, ashes to the lips of him who wins it too late! And yet we strive—and yet we persevere—and yet we sacrifice all for the hope of that.'

The cab took him to one of the gates of the Temple, and deposited him finally in King's-bench-walk. Here he had his chambers, a handsome suite upon the first floor, where he chose to live in defiance of fashion. He fully knew the value of externals, and that well-made chairs and tables are in a manner the outward expression of a man's mental worth. There was no *bric-à-brac*; nor were the doors shadowed by those ruby velvet *portières*, which seem to prevail more in light literature than in the houses of everyday life. The rooms were large and lofty, and had all the charm of fine old mantelpieces, deep window seats, and well-preserved panelling. The furniture was solid and in good order—a little old-fashioned, and therefore in harmony with the rooms. There were books on every side, but no luxury of binding—such books as a gentleman and a lawyer should possess—in sober decent garb, and arranged with an extreme nicety in fine old mahogany book-cases of that Georgian period whereof the furniture seems always to bear on its front a palpable protest against any pretensions to beauty. There were two or three comfortable easy-chairs, upholstered in russet morocco; a writing-table with innumerable drawers and pigeon-holes; a pair of handsome bronze moderator lamps; and over the high mantelpiece in the principal room one picture, the only picture in Hubert Walgrave's chambers.

It was a portrait, the portrait of a woman, with a face of almost perfect loveliness—arch, piquant, bewitching, with hazel eyes that had the light of happy laughter in their brightness. The costume, which the painter had made a little fanciful in its character, was obviously old-fashioned; between thirty and forty years old at the least. As a work of art the picture was a gem, a portrait which Reynolds or Romney—'the man in Cavendish-square'—might have been proud of.

A quiet-looking middle-aged man-servant received Mr. Walgrave, and busied himself with the carrying in of the luggage. He was half

butler, half valet; slept in a closet off the small kitchen which lurked at the back of those handsome rooms; and with the aid of a laundress, who might often be heard scrubbing and sweeping in the early morning, but was rarely beheld by human eye except his own, conducted Mr. Walgrave's household. He was altogether a model servant, the result of a good many experiments in the domestic line, was efficient in the duties of a valet, and could broil a chop and boil a potato to perfection, and conducted in no small measure to Hubert Walgrave's comfort. His name was Cuppage—Christian name Abraham—not by reason of any Jewish element in his race, but on account of the Biblical tendencies of his mother, to whom he still proudly alluded, on familiar occasions, as an unequalled clear-starcher and a staunch Bible Christian.

'Any letters, Cuppage?' Mr. Walgrave inquired, flinging himself into his favourite arm-chair, and looking round the room listlessly.

It was a very pleasant room, looking westward, and commanding a fine view of that one feature which London has most reason to boast of, the river. It was a comfortable room, stamped with the individuality of the man to whom it belonged, and Mr. Walgrave was fond of it. His books, his papers, his pipes, all the things which made life agreeable to him, were here. In this room he had worked for the last seven years, ever since he had begun to earn money by his profession; and the book-shelves had been filling gradually all that time, every volume added by his own hands, picked up by himself, and in accordance with his own especial tastes.

He began to be reconciled to the change from that shady old house in Kent, with the perfume of a thousand flowers blowing in at every window. London was dull, and empty, and dingy, but he had the things he cared for—books and perfect ease.

'I think I was made to be an old bachelor,' he thought. 'I should hardly care to leave these rooms to inhabit a palace, unless—unless it was with Grace Redmayne. Strange that a farmer's daughter, educated at a provincial boarding-school, should exercise more influence over me than any woman I ever met—should seem to me cleverer and brighter than the brightest I ever encountered in society. I don't think I am so weak a fool as to be won by beauty alone, though I would be the last to underrate *that* charm. I don't think I should have been so fond of that girl, if she were not something more than beautiful.'

'I should have been so fond.' Mr. Walgrave put his passion in a past tense, tried to consider it altogether a thing of the past; and then began to walk slowly up and down his room, now and then pausing by one of the three windows to look absently out at the sunlit river, with its fleet of black panting steamers and slow coal barges, with here and there a dingy sail flapping in the faint summer wind, thinking of Grace Redmayne.

What was she doing just at this moment? he wondered. Waiting listlessly in the garden, quite alone and very sorrowful.

'I shall never forget that white despairing face of hers,' he said to himself. 'The thought of it gives me an actual pain at my heart. If—if I were a weak man, I should take my carpet-bag and go back by the afternoon train; I can fancy how the sweet face would light up at sight of me. But I should be something worse than a fool if I did that. The wrench is over. Thank Heaven, I acted honourably; told her the truth from the first. And now I have only to make it my business to forget her.'

There were letters for him. Cuppage had arranged them symmetrically in a neat group upon the writing-table at the right hand of the morocco-covered slope on which Mr. Walgrave was wont to write. He ceased from his promenade presently, and directed his attention to these, as some sort of distraction from meditations which he felt were perilous. They were not likely to be particularly interesting—his letters had been forwarded to him daily at Brierwood—but they would serve to occupy his mind for an hour or so.

There was one, bearing the Kensington post-mark, in a hand which surprised him. A large thick envelope, sealed with a monogram in gold and colour, and directed in a bold firm hand, square and uniform in style, which might be masculine or feminine.

It was very familiar to Hubert Walgrave. He gave a little start of surprise—not altogether pleased surprise—on seeing this letter, and tore open the envelope hurriedly, to the utter destruction of the emblazoned monogram, in which the initials A.H.V. went in and out of each other in the highest style of florid gothic.

The letter was not a long one.

'Acropolis-square, August 19th.

'My dear Hubert,—You will no doubt be surprised to receive my letter from the above address. Papa grew suddenly tired of Ems, and elected to spend the rest of the autumn in England. So here we are for a day or two, deliberating whether we shall go to some quiet watering-place, or pay off some of our arrears with friends. Papa lent the Ryde villa to Mrs. Filmer before we went away, and of course we can't turn her out. The Stapletons want us at Hayley, and the Beresfords have asked us for ever so many years to Abblecopp Abbey, a fine old place in the depths of Wales. But I dare say the question will resolve itself into our going to Eastbourne or Bognor.

'I hope you are getting quite strong and well. If there were any chance of your being in town for a few hours—I suppose you do come sometimes on business—between this and next Thursday, we should be very glad to see you; but I do not wish to interfere with your doctor's injunctions about rest and quiet. Ems was dull à faire frémir. Half a dozen eccentric toilettes, as many ladies who

were talked about, a Russian prince, and all the rest the dreariest of the invalid species—so even Kensington-gardens in August are agreeable by way of a change.—Always sincerely yours,

‘ AUGUSTA HARCROSS VALLORY.’

Mr. Walgrave twisted the letter round in his fingers thoughtfully, with rather a grim smile upon his face.

‘Cool,’ he said to himself. ‘A gentlemanlike epistle. None of the Eloisa or Sappho to Phaon business, at any rate. I wonder what kind of a letter Grace Redmayne would write me if we were plighted lovers, and had not seen each other for seven or eight weeks. What a gushing stream of tenderness would well from that fond young heart! “Augusta Harcross Vallory,”’ looking at the dashing semi-masculine autograph with a half-scornful admiration. ‘What a fine straight up-and-down hand she writes—with a broad-nibbed pen, and a liberal supply of ink! One could fancy her signing death-warrants just as firmly. I wonder she doesn’t sign herself “Harcross and Vallory.” It would seem more natural. Not a bad name for a barony, by the way—like Stamford and Warrington. Her husband may be raised to the peerage some day by such a title.’ And at the suggestion made in bitter jest a dim faint vision of an ermine cap with six pearls arose before Hubert Walgrave’s mental gaze.

‘Men have sat in the Upper House who began with smaller advantages than mine,’ he thought. ‘A fortune like Augusta Vallory’s will buy anything in commercial England. One by one the old names are dropping out of the list; and of ten new ones, eight are chosen for the extent of a landed estate, or the balance at a bank. And when money is conjoined with professional renown, the thing is so easy. But it would be rather singular if I were to sit in the Upper House and Sir Francis Clevedon in the Lower.’

He looked at his watch. Three o’clock. The day was so old already, and he had done nothing—not even answered the three or four letters that required to be answered. He took a quire of paper, dashed off a few rapid replies, left Miss Vallory’s note unanswered, and lighted a meditative cigar. Cuppage came in while he was smoking it to inquire if his master would dine at home.

‘No. You can put my things ready for me in an hour. I shall dine out this evening, and I may want to dress early.’

The cigar suited him. That little commonplace note of Augusta Vallory’s had diverted his mind in some measure—had sent his thoughts in a new direction. He was no longer depressed. On the contrary, he was pleased with himself and the world—rather proud of his own conduct during the late crisis in his life—inclined to applaud and approve himself as a generous, honourable-minded man of the world. He did not consider that honour and generosity and worldliness were in any way incompatible.

'Nothing could have been more straightforward than my conduct to that dear girl,' he said to himself. 'From first to last I was thoroughly candid. Come what may, I can have nothing to reproach myself with on that score.'

CHAPTER XI.

ON DUTY.

EVERYBODY knows Acropolis-square and the region to which it belongs—the region amidst which has of late arisen the Albert Hall, but where at this remoter period the Albert Hall was not; only the glittering fabric of the Horticultural Society's great conservatory and an arid waste, whereon the Exhibition of 1862 had lately stood. Acropolis-square is a splendid quadrangle of palatial residences, whose windows look out upon a geometrically-arranged garden, where small detachments of the juvenile aristocracy, not yet 'out,' play croquet in the warm June noontide, or in the dewy twilight, when mamma and the elder girls have driven off to halls of dazzling light, and the governesses are off duty.

Acropolis-square, in the height of the London season—when there are carriages waiting at half the doors, and awnings hung over half the balconies, and a wealth of flowers everywhere, and pretty girls mounting for their canter in the Row, and a general flutter of gaiety and animation pervading the very atmosphere—is bright and pleasant enough; but at its best it has all the faults of New London. Every house is the facsimile of its neighbour; there is none of that individuality of architecture which gives a charm to the more sombre mansions of the old-fashioned squares—Grosvenor and Portman and Cavendish; not a break in the line of porches; not a difference of a mullion in the long range of windows; and instead of the deep mellow hue of that red-brick which so admirably harmonises with the gray background of an English sky, the perpetual gloom of a dark drab stucco.

The city of Babylon, when her evil days had fallen upon her, was not drearier than Acropolis-square at the end of August; so Hubert Walgrave thought, as a hansom, with irreverent rapidity, whisked him round a corner, and into that solemn quadrangle of stucco palaces, from whose drab fronts the gay striped awnings had vanished and the flowers departed, and where no 'click' of croquet ball sounded on the burnt-up grass in the enclosure.

Mr. Vallory's house was one of the most perfectly appointed in the square. It was not possible to give an individual character to any one of those stucco mansions; but so far as the perfection of hearth-stoning and window-cleaning could go, the character of Mr. Vallory's mansion was respectability, solidity, a gravity of aspect that suggested wealth. The dining-room curtains, of which every respectful passer-by caught a glimpse, were of the deepest and darkest

est shade of claret—no gaudy obtrusive crimson or ruby—and of a material so thick that the massive folds seemed hewn out of stone. The shutters to the dining-room windows were dark oak, relieved by the narrowest possible beading of gold. Even the draperies that shrouded the French casements of the drawing-room were a dark-green silk damask; and the only ornaments visible from the outside were bronze statuettes, and monster vases of purple-and-gold Oriental china. The muslins, and laces, and chintzes, and rose-coloured linings which gladdened the eye in neighbouring houses had no place here.

A footman in a dark chocolate livery, and with his hair powdered, admitted Mr. Walgrave to the hall, which was adorned with a black marble stove like a tomb, an ecclesiastical brass lamp, and had altogether a sepulchral look, as of a mortuary chapel. The man gave a faintly supercilious glance at the departing hansom—Mr. Vallory had so few cabs in his visiting-list—before he ushered Mr. Walgrave to the drawing-room.

‘Is Miss Vallory at home?’

‘Yes, sir; Miss Vallory returned from her drive half an hour ago.’

The drawing-room was quite empty, however; and the footman departed in quest of Miss Vallory’s maid, to whom to communicate the arrival of a visitor for her mistress—whereby Miss Vallory had to wait about ten minutes for the information. The drawing-room was empty—a howling wilderness of gorgeous furniture, opening by means of a vast archway into a smaller desert, where a grand piano stood in the centre of a barren waste of Axminster carpet. Everything in the two rooms was of the solid school—no nonsense about it—and everything was costly to the last degree. Ebony cabinets, decorated with clusters of fruit, in cornelian and agate; Hercules and the Bull in bronze, on a stand of verde antique. No cups and saucers, no Dresden déjeuners, no Chelsea shepherdesses, no photograph albums; but a pair of carved-oak stands for engravings, supporting elephantine portfolios of Albert Dürer’s and Rembrandt’s etchings, and early impressions from plates of Hogarth’s own engraving. There were a few choice pictures, small and modern, things that had been among the gems of their year in the Academy; just enough to show that neither taste nor wealth was wanting for the collection of a gallery. There was an exquisite group in white marble, forming the centre of a vast green satin ottoman; but of *bric-à-brac* there was none. The idler found no dainty rubbish, no costly trifles scattered on every side to amuse an empty quarter of an hour. After he had examined the half dozen or so of pictures, he could only pace the Axminster, contemplative of the geometrical design in various shades of green, or gaze dreamily from one of the windows at the drab palaces on the other side of the square.

Hubert Walgrave paced the carpet, and looked about the room thoughtfully as he walked. It seemed larger to him than it had

ever appeared before, after that shady parlour at Brierwood, with its low ceiling and heavy oaken beams, dark-brown panelling and humble furniture. In such rooms as this he might hope to live all his life, and to enjoy all the distinction which such surroundings give—without Grace Redmayne. The picture of his future life, with all the advantages of wealth and influence which his marriage was to bring him, had always been very agreeable to him. He was scarcely the kind of man to be fascinated by that other picture of love in a cottage. And yet to-day, face to face with Hercules and the Bull, his vagabond fancy, taking its own road in spite of him, shaped the vision of a life with Grace in some trim suburban villa—a hard-working life, with desperate odds against success, only the woman he loved for his wife, and domestic happiness.

'It isn't as if I hadn't even some kind of position already,' he said to himself, 'to say nothing of having a decent income of my own. And yet, what would my chances be with old Vallory dead against me? That man could crumple me up like a bit of waste paper. To do him a deadly wrong would be certain ruin. And what would be left me then? To drag on miserably upon the outskirts of my profession and live upon three hundred a year; no house in Mayfair; no villa between Strawberry-hill and Chertsey; no crack club—I couldn't afford even that tranquil haven for man's misfortune; no Eton for my boys; no Hanoverian governess for my girls; no yacht, no stable, no social status. Only Grace's sweet face growing pinched and worn with petty cares and daily worries; a herd of children in a ten-roomed house; a maid-of-all-work to cook my dinner; summonses for unpaid poor-rates on every mantelpiece; the water-supply cut off with a dismal regularity once a quarter. Who doesn't know every detail of the sordid picture? Pshaw! Why, were I even inclined to sacrifice myself—and I am not—it would be no kindness to Grace to consummate my own extinction by such a step.'

There was a strange wavering of the balance; but the scales always turned ultimately on the same side—the side of worldly wisdom. True as the needle to the pole was the mind of Hubert Walgrave to the one grave fact that he must needs succeed in life—succeed in the popular acceptance of the word—win money and honour; make a name for himself, in short.

'Other men can afford to take life lightly,' he said to himself; 'to ruin themselves even, in a gentlemanly way. They start from an elevation; and it takes a long time going down hill. I begin at the bottom, and am bound to climb. Essex could trifle with opportunities which were of vital importance to Raleigh. Yet they both ended the same way, by the bye, the trifler and the deep thinker.'

A door opened with the resonance of a door in a cathedral, and a rustle of silken fabric announced the approach of Miss Vallory.

Augusta Vallory, sole daughter of the house and heart of Mr. Wil-

Sam Vallory, solicitor, of Harcross, Vallory, and Vallory, Austin Friars, was not a woman to be criticised lightly, with a brief sentence or two. She was eminently handsome—tall, beyond the common height of women, with sloping shoulders and a willowy waist; a long slim throat, crowned with a head that was almost classic in form, a face about which there could be scarcely two opinions.

She was a brunette: her eyes the darkest hazel, cold and clear; her hair as nearly black as English hair ever is; her complexion faultless; a skin which never lacked exactly the right tints of crimson and creamy white—a complexion so perfect, that if Miss Vallory had an enemy of her own sex, that enemy might have suggested *rouge de rouge* and *blanc Rosati*; a delicate aquiline nose, thin lips—just a shade too thin perhaps—a finely modelled chin, and flashing white teeth, that gave life and light to her face. The forehead was somewhat low and narrow; and, perfect as the eyelashes and eyebrows might be, the eyes themselves had a certain metallic brilliancy, which was too much like the brightness of a deep-hued topaz or a catseye.

She was dressed superbly; indeed, dress with Miss Vallory was the most important business of life. She had never had occasion to give herself much trouble on any other subject; and to dress magnificently was at once an occupation and an amusement. To be striking, original, out of the common, was her chief aim. She did not affect the every-day pinks and blues and mauves of her acquaintance, but, with the aid of a French milliner, devised more artistic combinations—rich browns and fawns and dead-leaf tints, rare shades of gray, relieved by splashes of vivid colour—laces which a dowager duchess might have sighed for. Miss Vallory did not see any reason why the married of her sex should alone be privileged to wear gorgeous apparel. Rich silks and heavy laces became her splendid beauty better than the muslins and gauzes of the *demoiselle à marier*.

To-day she wore a fawn-coloured silk dress, with a train that swept the carpet for upwards of a yard behind her—a corded fawn-coloured silk high to the throat, without a vestige of trimming on body or sleeves, but a wide crimson sash tied in a loose knot on one side of the slender waist. The tight sleeves, the narrow linen collar became her to admiration. A doubtful complexion would have been made execrable by the colour; every defect in an imperfect figure would have been rendered doubly obvious by the fashion of the dress. Miss Vallory wore it in the insolence of her beauty, as if she would have said, 'Imitate me if you dare!'

The lovers shook hands, kissed each other even, in a business-like way.

'Why, Hubert, how well you are looking!' said Miss Vallory.

'I expected to see you still an invalid.'

'Well, no, my dear Augusta; there must come an end to every-

thing. I went into the country to complete my cure; and I think I may venture to say that I am cured.'

Mr. Walgrave's tone grew graver with those last words. He was thinking of another disease than that for which the London physician had treated him, wondering whether he were really on the high road to recovery from that more fatal fever.

'I need not tell you how well *you* are looking,' he went on gaily; 'that is your normal state.'

'Ems was horrid,' exclaimed Miss Vallory. 'I was immensely glad to come away. How did you like your farmhouse? It must have been rather dreary work, I should think.'

'Yes; it did become rather dreary work—at the last.'

'You liked it very well at first, then?' inquired the young lady, with a slight elevation of the faultless eyebrows. She was not particularly sentimental; but she would have preferred to be told that he had found existence odious without her.

'No; it was not at all bad—for a week or so. The place is old-fashioned and picturesque, the country round about magnificent. There were plenty of chub, too; and there was a pike I very much wanted to catch. I shall go in for him again next year, I daresay.'

'I have never been able to comprehend what any man can find to interest him in fishing.'

'It has long been my hopeless endeavour to discover what *any* woman can have to say to her milliner for an hour and a half at a stretch,' answered Mr. Walgrave coolly.

Augusta Vallory smiled—a cold hard smile.

'I suppose you have found it rather tiresome when I have kept you waiting at Madame Bouffante's,' she said carelessly; 'but there are some things one cannot decide in a hurry; and Bouffante is too busy, or too grand, to come to me.'

'What an unfathomable science dress is! That gown you have on now, for instance,' surveying her critically, 'doesn't seem very elaborate. I should think you might make it yourself.'

'No doubt, if I had been apprenticed to a dressmaker. Unfortunately, papa omitted that branch of instruction from his programme for my education. Madame Bouffante cut this dress *herself*. The train is a new style, that was only introduced three weeks ago by the Empress of the French.'

'Good heavens! and I did not recognise the novelty when you came into the room. What a barbarian I am! But, do you know, I have seen women who made their own dresses—when I was a boy.'

'I cannot help it, my dear Hubert, if you have lived amongst curious people.'

He was thinking of Grace Redmayne as he had seen her one Saturday afternoon seated under the cedar, running the seams of a blue-and-white muslin dress which she was to wear at church.



Louis Huard, del.

Edmund Evans

MR. WALGRAVE INVITES HIMSELF TO DINNER.

next morning, and in which, to his eyes, she had seemed fairer than a wood nymph. Yet Miss Vallory was much handsomer than Grace, even without the adventitious aid of dress—much handsomer, but not so lovely.

‘I have come to ask if I may stay to dinner,’ said Mr. Walgrave, seated comfortably on the great green satin ottoman, with Miss Vallory by his side—not ridiculously near him in any lackadaisical plighted-lover-like fashion, but four or five feet away, with a flowing river of fawn-coloured silk between them. ‘You see, I am in regulation costume.’

‘Papa will be very glad. We have not told any one we are in town; and indeed I don’t suppose there is a creature we know in London. You will enliven him a little.’

‘And papa’s daughter?’

‘O, of course; you know I am always pleased to see you. Half-past six. If you are very good I won’t change my dress for dinner, and we can have a comfortable gossip instead.’

‘I mean to be unexampled in goodness. But under ordinary circumstances—with no one you know in town—would you really put on something more splendid than that orange-tawny gown, for the sole edification of the butler?’

‘I dress for papa, and because I am in the habit of doing so, I suppose.’

‘If women had only a regulation costume like ours—black silk, and a white muslin tie—what an amount of envy and heart-burning might be avoided! And it would give the handsome ones a fairer start—weight for age, as it were—instead of the present system of handicapping.’

‘I don’t in the least understand what you mean, Hubert. Imagine girls in society dressed in black, like the young women in a haberdasher’s shop!’

‘Yes, that’s an objection. Yet *we* submit to apparel ourselves like butlers. However, being so perfect as you are, it is foolishness to wish you otherwise. And now tell me all your news. I languish to hear what you have been doing.’

This was an agreeable easy-going manner of concealing the fact that Mr. Walgrave had nothing particular to say. The woman who was to be his wife was handsome, accomplished, well versed in all worldly knowledge; yet they met after eight weeks’ severance and he had nothing to say to her. He could only lean lazily back upon the ottoman, and admire her with cold critical eyes. Time had been when he fancied himself in love with her. He could never have won so rich a prize without some earnestness of intention on his own part, without some reality of feeling; but whatever force the passion had possessed was all expended, it was gone utterly. He looked at her to-day, and told himself that she was one of the

handsomest women in London, and that he cared for her no more than if she had been a statue.

She was very handsome; but so is a face in a picture. He had seen many faces on canvas that had more life, and light, and soul in them than had ever glorified hers. His heart had been so nearly her own, but she had wrought no spell to hold it. What had she ever given him, except her cold business-like consent to be his wife, at some vaguely defined future period, when his prospects and position should be completely satisfactory to her father? What had she ever given him—what tears, or fond looks from soft beseeching eyes, or little clinging touches of a tremulous white hand—what evidence that he was nearer or dearer to her than any other eligible person in her visiting list? Did he not know only too well that in her mind this lower world began and ended with Augusta Vallory—that nothing in the universe had any meaning for her except so far as it affected herself? One night when she had been singing Tennyson's song, 'Home they brought her warrior dead,' Mr. Walgrave said to her as he leant across the piano,

'If you had been the lady, Augusta, what a nuisance you would have considered the funeral!'

'Funerals are very dreadful,' she answered with a shudder.

'And they might as well have buried her warrior where he fell. If I ever come to grief in the hunting-field, I will make an arrangement beforehand that they carry me straight to the nearest village deadhouse, and leave me there till the end.'

CHAPTER XII.

HARCROSS AND VALLORY.

WILLIAM VALLORY, of Harcross and Vallory, was one of the wealthiest attorneys in the city of London. The house had been established for something over a century, and the very name of the firm meant all that was most solid and expensive in legal machinery. The chief clerks at Vallory's—the name of Harcross was nowadays only a fiction, for the last Harcross slept the sleep of wealth and respectability in a splendid mausoleum at Kensal-green—the very clerks at Vallory's were full-blown lawyers, whose salaries gave them larger incomes than they could hope to earn by practising on their own account. The appearance of the house was like that of a bank, solemn and strong; with outer offices and inner offices; long passages, where the footfall was muffled by kamptulicon; Mr. Vallory's room, spacious and lofty, a magnificent apartment, which might have been built for a board-room, and Mr. Weston Vallory's room; Mr. Smith's room, Mr. Jones's room, Mr. Thompson's room. Weston Vallory attended to common law, and had an outer chamber thronged with anxious clients. Economy of labour had been studied

in all the arrangements. In the hall there was a large mahogany tablet inscribed with the names of the heads of the firm and chief clerks, and against every name a sliding label, with the magic word In, or the depressing announcement Out. The whole edifice was pervaded with gutta-percha tubing, and information of the most private character could be conveyed to far-off rooms in a stage whisper. There were humble clients who never got any farther than Mr. Thompson; and indeed to all common clay the head of the house was as invisible as the Mikado of Japan.

In the Bankruptcy Court there was no such power existent as Harcross and Vallory. Commissioners quailed before them, and judges themselves deferred to the Olympian power of William Vallory. The bankrupt—failing for half a million or so, the firm only undertook great cases—who confided himself to Harcross and Vallory was tenderly led through the devious paths of insolvency, and brought forth from the dark valley at last with a reputation white as the undriven snow. Under the Vallory treatment a man's creditors became the offenders; inasmuch as they did, by a licentious system of credit, lure him to his ruin. Half-a-crown in the pound in the hands of Harcross and Vallory went farther than seven-and-sixpence administered by a meaner house.

They were great in chancery business too, and kept a printing-press perpetually at work upon bills of complaint or answers. The light of their countenance was as the sunshine to young barristers, and even Queen's counsel bowed down and worshipped them. They never allowed a client to lift his finger, in a legal way, without counsel's opinion. They were altogether expensive, famous, and respectable. To have Harcross and Vallory for one's family solicitors was in itself a stamp of respectability.

They were reputed to be enormously rich, or rather William Vallory, in whose person the firm now centred, was so reputed. Weston Vallory, his nephew, was a very junior partner, taking a seventh share or so of the profits; a bachelor of about thirty, who rode a good horse, had a trim little villa at Norwood, and lived altogether in the odour of respectability. Not to be respectable would have entailed certain banishment from those solemn halls and stony corridors in the Old Jewry.

Stephen Harcross, Augusta Vallory's godfather, had died a wealthy old bachelor, and had left the bulk of his fortune, which was for the chief part in stock and shares of divers kinds, to his goddaughter—having lived at variance with his own flesh and blood, and being considerably impressed by the beauty, accomplishments, and general merits of that young lady. Whereby it came to pass that Miss Vallory, besides having splendid expectations from her father, was already possessor of a clear three thousand per annum. What her father might have to leave was an open question. He

lived at the rate of five thousand a year; but was supposed to be making at least eight, and Augusta was his only child.

It was, of course, a wonderful stroke of fortune for such a man as Hubert Walgrave, with three hundred a year and his profession, to become the accepted suitor of Augusta Vallory. The thing had come about simply enough. Her father had taken him by the hand three or four years before; had been pleased with him, and had invited him a good deal to Acropolis-square, and to a villa at Ryde, where the Vallorys spent some part of every summer—invited him in all unconsciousness of any danger in such an acquaintance. He had naturally rather lofty notions upon the subject of his daughter's matrimonial prospects. He was in no hurry for her to marry; would, so far as his own selfish desires went, have infinitely preferred that she should remain unmarried during his lifetime. But she was a beauty and an heiress, and he told himself that she must inevitably marry, and could hardly fail to marry well. He had vague visions of a coronet. It would be pleasant to read his daughter's name in the *Peerage* before he died. All such ideas were put to flight, however, when Miss Vallory coolly announced to him one morning that Mr. Walgrave had proposed to her on the previous night, and that with her father's approval she meant to marry him; not without her father's approval, she was much too-well-brought-up a young woman to conceive the possibility of any such rebellion. But on the other hand, if she were not allowed to marry Hubert Walgrave, she would certainly marry no one else.

William Vallory was dumfounded. He had suspected nothing, seen nothing. There had been a few accidental meetings at flower-shows in London. Hubert Walgrave had been among the young men most frequently invited to fill up the ranks at the Acropolis-square dinner-parties; he knew a good many people in Miss Vallory's set, and had happened thus to meet her very often in the course of the London season. Then came an autumn invitation to Mr. Vallory's villa at Ryde; a great deal of idling on the pier, an occasional moonlit stroll, a little yachting—most fascinating of all pleasures; during which Augusta Vallory, who was never sea-sick, looked her handsomest, in the most perfect marine costume that a French dressmaker could devise.

It was while he was on board Mr. Vallory's yacht, the *Arion*, one balmy August morning that Hubert Walgrave told himself for the first time that he was in love with Augusta. She was sitting opposite him, making a pretence of reading a novel, dressed in blue and white, with a soft cashmere scarf floating about her tall slim figure, and a high-crowned hat with a bunch of white-and-blue feathers crowning the massive plaits of black hair.

'Why shouldn't I marry her?' Mr. Walgrave said to himself. 'The notion looks preposterous at the first showing, but I really

think she likes me—and she must marry some one. Her fortune would be an immense assistance to me; and over and above that, she is a woman who would help her husband to get on in life, even if she hadn't sixpence. She is the only woman I have ever really admired; perhaps the only woman who ever liked me.'

At this stage of Hubert Walgrave's career he had no very exalted idea of that passion which makes or mars the lives of some men and counts for so little in the careers of others. He meant never to marry at all unless he could marry to his own direct and immediate advantage. If he married he must marry money, that was dear. The income which was ample for all his wants as a single man would be ridiculously small when set against the requirements of a wife and family. He was very positive upon this point, but he was no heiress-hunter. Not the wealth of Miss Kilmansegg would have tempted him to unite himself to a fright or a dowdy, a woman who dropped her *h's*, or was in any manner unrepresentable. Nor did he go out of his way to seek Miss Vallory. Fate threw them together, and he merely improved his opportunity. Of all the men she had ever known he was the one who treated her with most nonchalance, who paid least court to her beauty or her wealth. Perhaps it was for this very reason that she fell in love with him, so far as it was in her nature to fall in love with any one.

So one moonlit night on the little lawn at Ryde—a grassy slope that went down to the beach—Mr. Walgrave proposed, in a pleasant, gentlemanlike, unimpassioned way.

'Of course, my dear Augusta,' he said in conclusion, 'I cannot be blind to the fact that I am a very bad match for you, and that I am bound to do a good deal more than I have done towards winning a position before I can reasonably expect any encouragement from your father. But I am not afraid of hard work, and if *you* are only favourably disposed towards me I shall feel inspired to do anything—push my way to the woolsack, or something of that kind.'

And then, little by little, he induced Miss Vallory to admit that she was favourably disposed towards him—very favourably; that she had liked him almost from the first. That final confession was going as far as any well-brought-up young person could be expected to go.

'You have not been so absurdly attentive as other men,' she said, 'and I really believe I have liked you all the better on that account.'

Mr. Walgrave smiled, and registered an unspoken vow to the effect that Miss Vallory should have ample cause to continue so to like him.

It was rather a long time before Mr. Vallory quite got over the shock occasioned by his daughter's astounding announcement; but he did ultimately get over it, and consented to receive Hubert Walgrave as his future son-in-law.

'I will not attempt to conceal from you that it is a disappointment,' he said; 'I may say a blow, a very severe blow. I had hoped that Augusta would make a brilliant marriage. I think I had a right to expect as much. But I have always liked you, Walgrave, and—and—if my daughter really knows her own mind, I can hold out no longer. You will not think of marrying just yet, I suppose?'

'I am quite in your hands upon that point, my dear sir. My own desire would be to make an assured position for myself before I ask Augusta to share my fortunes. I couldn't, on any consideration, become a dependent on my wife; and my present income would not allow me to give her an establishment which should, even in a minor degree, be the kind of thing she has been accustomed to.'

'That's all high-flown nonsense!' exclaimed Mr. Vallory rather impatiently. 'If you marry Augusta, you will marry her money as well as herself. As to waiting till you've a silk gown—well, you may do it if you like, and if she likes. I shall be glad to keep her near me as long as I can. But you will be as old as I am, I take it, before you can hope to win a position that would be anything like what she has a right to expect. She has made a bad bargain, you see, my dear Walgrave; and there's no use in you or me trying to make-believe that it's a good one.'

Hubert Walgrave's dark face grew just a shade darker at this, and the flexible lips tightened a little.

'If it is so very bad a bargain, sir,' he said gravely, 'it is not at all too late for you to rescind your approval, or for me to withdraw my pretensions.'

The great William Vallory looked absolutely frightened. He is only child had a will of her own, and a temper of her own; and he had had more than one unpleasant scene with her already upon this question.

'No, no, my dear fellow!' he answered hastily; 'bless my soul, how touchy you are! Haven't I told you that I like you? My daughter's feelings are involved; and if she likes to marry for love, she can afford to do it. It will not be love in a cottage; or, if it is, it will be a cottage of gentility, with a double coach-house, and so on.'

Thus Mr. Walgrave found himself accepted, much more easily than he could have supposed it possible he should be. He was engaged to a young woman with three thousand a year in the present, and unlimited expectations of future wealth. It seemed like some wild dream. Yet he bore this sudden fortune with the utmost equanimity. Indeed, it scarcely surprised him: he had made up his mind from the beginning to prosper in life.

Once, and once only, William Vallory ventured upon some slight inquiry as to his future son-in-law's connections.

'I have never heard you speak of your family,' he said one even-

ing, as the two men sat alone in the spacious dining-room—an apartment that was almost awful in its aspect when sparsely occupied—with a Pompeian claret-jug between them. ‘I need scarcely say how pleased I shall be to make the acquaintance of any of your people.’

‘I have no people,’ Mr. Walgrave answered coolly. ‘I think you must have heard me say that I stand quite alone in the world. Augusta will not receive many wedding presents from my side of the house; but, on the other hand, she will not be troubled by any poor relations of mine. My father and mother both died while I was a youngster. I was brought up in Essex by a maiden aunt. She too has been dead for the last five-and-twenty years, poor soul! She was a kind friend to me.’

‘Your father was a professional man, I suppose,’ hazarded Mr. Vallory, who would have been gratified by a more communicative spirit in his future son-in-law.

‘He was not. He lived upon his own means, and spent them.’

‘But he left you fairly provided for.’

‘He left me three hundred a year, thanks to the good offices of a friend who had considerable influence over him. The money was settled upon me in such a way that my father could not touch it. I should have begun life a beggar, if it had been in his power to dispose of the money.’

‘You don’t speak very kindly of him.’

‘Perhaps not. I daresay I am somewhat wanting in filial reverence. The fact is, he could have afforded to do a good deal more for me than he did do, and I have not yet learnt to forgive him. He was not a good father, and, frankly, I don’t much care about talking of him.’

This was like a conversational dead-wall, with ‘No thoroughfare’ inscribed upon it. Mr. Vallory asked no more questions. Hubert Walgrave was a gentleman—that was the grand point; and it mattered very little how many uncles and aunts he had, or if he were totally destitute of such kindred. He was clever, energetic, hard-working, and tolerably sure to get on in the world.

‘I am not marrying my daughter to a drone, who would stick a flower in his button-hole, and live on his wife’s fortune; that is one comfort,’ the lawyer said to himself.

He had, indeed, no reason to complain of any lack of industry in Hubert Walgrave. From the hour in which his engagement to Miss Vallory became a settled thing he worked harder than ever. That which would have tempted most men to idleness urged him to fiercer effort, to more eager pursuit of that single aim of his existence—self-advancement. He wanted to win a reputation before he married; he did not want people to be able to say, ‘There goes that lucky fellow Walgrave, who married old Vallory’s daughter.’ He wished to be pointed out rather as the celebrated Mr. Walgrave, the

Queen's counsel, and his lucky marriage spoken of as a secondary affair, springing out of his success.

With this great end in view—a very worthy aim, in the opinion of a man of his creed, which did not embrace very lofty ideas of this life—Mr. Walgrave had very nearly worked himself into a galloping consumption; and while going this high-pressure pace had been brought to a sudden standstill by that perilous illness which had led to his holiday at Brierwood. Skilful treatment, and a naturally good constitution, which would bear some abuse, had pulled him through, and he was what our forefathers used to call 'on the mending hand,' when he went down to the old farmhouse, to fall sick of a still more troublesome disease.

CHAPTER XIII.

'THE SHOWS OF THINGS ARE BETTER THAN THEMSELVES.'

MR. VALLORY came in just before dinner, bringing a visitor with him—rather a dandified-looking young man, of the unmistakable City type, with faultless boots, a hothouse flower in his button-hole, carefully-arranged black whiskers, a good-looking supercilious face, a figure just above the middle height, eyes like Augusta's, and a complexion that was a great deal too good for a man. This was the junior partner, the seventh-share man, Weston Vallory.

'I found your cousin Weston at the office, Augusta,' said Mr. Vallory, 'and brought him home to dinner. You must excuse his morning dress; I wouldn't give him time to change his clothes.'

'I always keep a dress suit at the office, and Pullman the porter valets me,' said Weston. 'I only asked for ten minutes; but you know how impatient your father is, Augusta. So behold me!'

He kissed his cousin, and gave the tips of his fingers to Hubert Walgrave. There was no great affection between those two. Weston had fully intended to marry Augusta, and had been both astounded and outraged by her engagement.

They dined at eight, and the banquet was not especially lively—a little over-weighted with attendance, and plate, and splendour; a large round table, with a pyramid of gaudy autumnal flowers—Japanese clematis and scarlet geranium, calceolaria and verbenas—in the centre; four people scarcely able to see each other's faces without an effort, and three solemn servants waiting upon them. Mr. Vallory and his nephew talked shop. Augusta asked her lover little commonplace questions about commonplace things, and gave him small shreds and patches of information respecting her stay at Ems. He caught himself on the brink of a yawn more than once. He thought of the dusky garden at Brierwood—the perfume of the flowers, the low music of Grace Redmayne's voice, the tender touch

of her hand. He thought of these things even while Augusta was entertaining him with a lively description of some outrageous costumes she had seen at Ems.

But presently he brightened up a little, and made it his business to be amusing, talking in, O, such a stereotyped way, like a creature in genteel comedy. He felt his own dreariness—felt that between him and the woman he was to marry there was no point of union, no touch of sympathy. She talked of Parisian dresses; he talked of the people they knew, in a semi-supercilious style that did duty for irony; and he was miserably conscious of the stupidity and narrowness of the whole business.

He remembered himself roaming in the gardens at Clevedon Hall—along the moss-grown paths, by the crumbling wall where the unprotected cherries ripened for the birds of the air, among the dilapidated cucumber-frames, in a wilderness of vegetable profusion, where the yellow pumpkins sprawled in the sunshine, by the great still pond overhung by a little grove of ancient quince-trees, in and out amidst waste, neglect, and sweetness—with Grace Redmayne by his side. Was it really the same man seated at this table, peeling a peach, with his eyebrows elevated languidly, and little cynical speeches dropping now and then from his thin lips?

Augusta Vallory was quite satisfied with her lover. He was gentleman-like and undemonstrative, and had nothing kindly to say about any one or anything. She had no admiration for those exuberant hearty young men from the Universities, great at hammer-throwing and long jumps, who were beginning to overrun her circle—youths with loud cheery voices and sunburnt faces, hands blistered by rowing, and a general healthiness and joyousness of aspect. They only bored her.

After dinner, when Vallory senior and Vallory junior were playing a game of billiards in a room that had been built out at the back of the house over some offices, half-way between the dining and the drawing rooms, the fair Augusta amused herself by questioning her lover about his life in Kent. It must have been ineffably dismal. What had he done with himself? how had he contrived to dispose of his time?

'Well, of course,' said Mr. Walgrave dreamily, 'that sort of life is rather monotonous. You get up and eat your breakfast, and walk a little and write a little and read a little; and, if you happen to be a man with that resource open to you, you smoke a great deal, and eat your dinner, and go to bed. And you hardly know Monday from Tuesday; if you were put in a witness-box you couldn't swear whether a given event happened at the end of the week or the beginning. But to a fellow who wants rest, that kind of life is not altogether disagreeable; he gets a honey-comb for his breakfast, a dish of fresh trout now and then, and cream in his tea. And then,

you see,' concluded Mr. Walgrave, making a sudden end of the subject with a suppressed yawn, 'I read a good deal.'

'You read a good deal! when the doctors had especially bidden work!'

'O, but it wasn't hard work, and I don't believe I did any good by it; it was only a desultory kind of reading. I was rather anxious about *Cardinum versus Cardinum*, that case in which your father wants me to make a figure; and I dug up some old precedents bearing on it. There was a man in the time of James II. who went in against his next-of-kin on exactly the same grounds. And I read a novel of Anthony Trollope's.'

'There could be no harm in your reading a novel. You have read all the novels of the season, I should think, in a few weeks.'

'No; I did a good deal of fishing. I made the acquaintance of a jack that I mean to bring to terms at some future date. He is to be had this year.'

Miss Vallory asked a great many more questions; but she was astonished how little Mr. Walgrave had to tell of his Kentish experiences.

'You are not a particularly good hand at description, I observed,' she said at last, somewhat displeased by his reticence. 'If I had been Weston, he would have given me a perfect picture of the country house life, and the queer clodhopping country people, with an illustration of the dialect, and all that kind of thing.'

'If I were good at all that kind of thing, I should write magazines, and turn my gifts into money,' replied Mr. Walgrave, superciliously. 'I wish you'd play something, Augusta.'

This was a happy way of getting out of a difficulty, suggested by a glance at the open piano.

'I'll sing you something, if you like,' Miss Vallory said cheerfully. 'I was trying a new ballad this morning, which is rather in your style, I fancy.'

'Let me hear it, by all means.'

He went to the piano, adjusted the candles, which were already ready, waited while the performer seated herself, and then went to a comfortable easy-chair. Never during his courtship had his engagement had he fatigued himself by such puerile attentions as turning over the leaves of music, or cutting open magazines, or any of those small frivolous services by which some men make themselves precious to their womankind. Indeed, in a general way, he may be described as scrupulously inattentive. If this gift to give him her wealth, she should bestow it spontaneously, he should be no cajolery on his part, no abasement, not the sacrifice of self-esteem.

Miss Vallory sang her song. She had a strong mezzo-

voice of the metallic order—a voice that is usually described as fine—without a weak note in its range. She had been taught by the best masters, pronounced every syllable with undeviating accuracy, and had about as much expression as a musical box.

Hubert Walgrave thought of 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' and the soft sweet voice singing in the twilight, 'O, do you remember?' 'The Meeting of the Waters,' 'The light Guitar,' and all Grace Redmayne's little stock of familiar old-fashioned songs. The ballad was something of the new school: the slenderest thread of melody, eked out by a showy accompaniment; the poetry, something rather obscure and metaphysical, by a modern poet.

'Do you call that thing a ballad, Augusta?' he cried contemptuously, at the end of the first verse. 'For pity's sake sing me *Una voce*, or *Non più mesta*, to take the taste of that mawkish stuff out of my mouth.'

Miss Vallory complied, with tolerable grace.

'You are so capricious,' she said, as she played one of Rossini's symphonies, 'there is no knowing what you will like.'

She sang an Italian bravura superbly, looking superb as she sang it, without the faintest effort or distortion of feature, Mr. Walgrave watching her critically all the while.

'Upon my soul, she is a woman to be proud of,' he said to himself; 'and a man who would sacrifice such a chance as mine would be something worse than a lunatic.'

The two lawyers came into the room while Miss Vallory was singing, and Weston complimented her warmly at the close of the scena, while her plighted lover sat in his easy-chair and looked on. He knew very well that the man would have liked to take his place, and he never felt the sense of his triumph so keenly as when he was, in a manner, trampling on the neck of Weston Vallory.

'The black-whiskered scoundrel,' he said to himself; 'I know that man is a scoundrel, whom necessity has made respectable. He is just the kind of fellow I should expect to make away with his clients' securities, or something in that way. Very likely he may never do anything of the sort, may die in the odour of sanctity; but I know it's in him. And what a delightful thing it is to know that he hates me as he does, and that I shall have to be civil to him all the days of my life!'

And then, after a pause, he thought, 'If I were capable of getting myself into a mess, there's the man to profit by my folly.'

The unconscious subject of these meditations was leaning over the piano all this time, talking to his cousin. There was not much justification in his appearance or manners for such sweeping condemnation. He was like numerous other men to be met with daily in middle-class society—good-looking, well-dressed, with manners that could be deferential or supercilious according to the occasion.

He had plenty of acquaintance who called him a first-rate fellow and he was never at a loss for invitations to dinner. Only in the eyes of his, which were so like his cousin's in colour, there was hard glassy glitter, a metallic light, which was not agreeable to the physiognomist; nor had the full red lips a pleasant expression—sensuality had set its seal there, sensuality and a lurking cruelty. But the world in general took the black eyes and the black whiskers as the distinguishing characteristics of a very good-looking young man; a man in a most unexceptionable position; a man to be made much of by every family in which there were daughters to marry and sons to plant out in life.

Mr. Walgrave allowed this gentleman to engross the attention of his betrothed just as long as he chose. He fully knew the strength of the chain by which he held Augusta Vallory, and that he was in no danger from Weston.

'I believe poor Weston was brought up to think that he was going to marry me,' she said to her lover one day, with contemptuous compassion. 'His mother was a very foolish woman, who thought her children the most perfect creatures in the world. But Weston is really very good, and has always been quite devoted to papa and me. He owes everything to papa, of course. His father quarrelled with my grandfather, and got himself turned out of the firm. I have never heard the details of the story, but I believe he behaved very badly; and if papa hadn't taken Weston by the hand, his chances of advancement would have been extremely small. He is an excellent man of business, however, according to papa's count; and I think he is grateful.'

'Do you? Do you think any one ever is grateful?' Mr. Walgrave inquired in his cynical tone. 'I never met with a grateful man yet, nor heard of one, except that fellow Androcles—no, by the bye, it was the lion who was grateful, so Mr. Spectator's story counts for nothing. However, your cousin is, no doubt, an exception to the rule—he looks like it. Was the father transported?'

'Hubert! How can you be so absurd?'

'Well, my dear Augusta, you said he did something very bad, and I inferred that it was defalcation of some kind, tending towards penal servitude.'

'I believe the quarrel did arise out of money matters; but I should hope no member of *my* family would be dishonest.'

'My dear girl, dishonesty crops up in all kinds of families; dukedom will not protect you from the possibility. There are rogues in the peerage, I daresay. But I am not at all curious about Mr. Weston Vallory's father. The man himself is enough—I accept him as a fact.'

'You really have a very impertinent manner of speaking about my family,' Miss Vallory exclaimed with an aggrieved air.

'My dearest, if you expect that I am going to bow down and worship your family as well as yourself, you are altogether mistaken. It was you I wooed that sweet summer night at Ryde, not the whole race of Vallory. Upon that point I reserve the right to be critical.'

'You seem to be quite prejudiced against Weston.'

'Not at all. I will freely admit that I don't care very much for a man with such a brilliant complexion; but that is a mere capricious antipathy—like an aversion to roses—which I would hardly confess to any one but yourself.'

The lovers frequently indulged in small bickerings of this kind, by which means Mr. Walgrave maintained, or supposed that he maintained, his independence. He did not bow down and worship; and it happened curiously, that Miss Vallory liked him all the better for his habitual incivility. She had been surfeited by the attentions of men who thought of her only as the heiress of Harcross and Vallory. This man, with his habitual sneer and cool off-hand manner, seemed so much truer than the rest. And yet he was playing his own game, and meditating his own advantage; and the affection he had given her was so weak a thing, that it perished altogether under the influence of his first temptation.

In the course of the evening there was a discussion as to where Mr. Vallory and his daughter should go for the next six weeks. The father would gladly have stayed in Acropolis-square, and potted down to his office every day. There was always plenty of business for him, even in the long vacation, and it was nearer his heart than any of the pleasures of life; but Augusta protested against such an outrage of the proprieties.

'We should have fever, or cholera, or something, papa,' she said. 'That kind of thing always rages out of the London season.'

'The London death-rate was higher last May than in the preceding August, I assure you.'

'My dear papa, it is simply impossible. Let us go to the Stapletons. You know it is an old promise.'

'I hate staying at country houses: breakfasting with a herd of strangers every morning; and hearing billiard-balls going from morning till night; and not being able to find a corner where one can write a letter; and being perpetually driven about on pleasure jaunts; doing ruined abbeys, and waterfalls; not a moment's peace. All very well for young people; but actual martyrdom when one's on the wrong side of fifty. You can go to Haley if you like, Augusta; I would much rather go to Eastbourne.'

'In that case, I will go too, papa,' replied Miss Vallory. 'It's rather a pity you lent the villa to the Filmers; it would have been nice to have the Arion.'

'You can have the Arion at Eastbourne,' said Mr. Vallory. 'I didn't lend the yacht to the Filmers.'

'Very well, papa; let us go to Eastbourne. And Hubert can come down to us—can't you, Hubert?'

'I shall be delighted, of course, to run down for a day or two.'

'A day or two!' exclaimed Miss Vallory. 'Why shouldn't you spend all September with us? You can have nothing to do in London.'

'My dear Augusta, I came back to town on purpose to work. I can never do much good except in my own rooms, with my books of reference at hand.'

He rather shrank from the idea of Eastbourne—the half mile or so of parade—the band—the dull narrow round of seaside life. Ryde had been very agreeable to him last year, though his life had been the same kind of thing; but to-night he thought of such an existence with a strange aversion. Indeed, it seemed to him just now that nothing would be so pleasant as to bury himself in his chambers, with his books for his sole companions.

'But it is preposterous to think of working all through September,' urged Augusta, with a somewhat heightened colour. 'You really must come; the sea-air will do you a world of good. We shall have the Arion; and you are so fond of yachting.'

'Yes, I am very fond of yachting; but I scarcely feel equal to the gaieties of a watering-place. I would rather vegetate in the Temple.'

'But Eastbourne is not a gay place. It is the place of places for an invalid, if you still profess to be one.'

'My dear Augusta, if you command me to come, I will come, at any hazard to my professional advancement.'

'Come and go just as you like, Walgrave,' said Mr. Vallory. 'You're quite right to stick to your books; that *Cardium versus Cardium* is a great case, and if you come out strong with your precedents, you'll carry everything before you.—Don't be jealous of his work, Augusta; he means to make you a judge's wife one of these days. Weston can dance attendance upon you.'

'I don't dance,' said Weston; 'but I shall be most happy to be useful to my cousin.'

'And, by the way, Weston, as there's not much doing at the office just now, you might run down to Eastbourne to-morrow and see if there's a house to be had that would suit us,' Mr. Vallory said coolly. He had made the young man's fortune, and had a knack of ordering him about in this way.

Weston bowed. 'I have two or three interviews for to-morrow,' he said; 'but I can make Jones attend to the people. I don't know that I'm quite up in a house-agent's duties; but I suppose I shall know instinctively the kind of thing you want.'

'Instinctive fiddlesticks!' Mr. Vallory exclaimed impatiently.

'Augusta will give you a sheet of paper with a memorandum of the accommodation wanted.'

Mr. Walgrave smiled, congratulating himself upon his exemption from house-hunting. He felt a malicious delight in beholding Weston Vallory, one of the most conceited men he knew, charged with these ignominious services, while he, the rightful slave, went free. 'May all imaginable blessings descend upon the revered heads of the Cardinums!' he said to himself.

At a quarter to eleven o'clock he wished his betrothed and her father good-night. Weston took his departure at the same time, bound for the Charing-cross Station, whence a midnight train would carry him to Norwood. It was a clear moonlit night. Even the Acropolis-square houses were tolerable in that mellow atmosphere, with solitary tapers twinkling here and there in upper chambers, tenanted by a charwoman in charge, or a lonely scullion. There was a perfume of mignonette, a faint rustling of the sycamores in the enclosure, which reminded Hubert Walgrave dimly of the Brierwood garden.

'Do you mean to walk home?' Weston asked, as the two men left the house together.

'I don't care much whether I walk or ride. If I see a hansom, I daresay I shall hail it. Are you going to walk to the station?'

'I make a point of walking six miles a day, and I shall be very glad of your company on the way. We go the same road, I know.'

Mr. Walgrave submitted. He was a man somewhat given to strong antipathies, and Weston Vallory was one of his strongest.

'Confound the snob!' he thought; 'what makes him fasten himself on to me, I wonder?'

He had no occasion to wonder long. The drift of his companion's conversation soon convinced him that Weston Vallory wanted to pump him: to get at the history of his eight weeks' holiday—to test his feelings in regard to his betrothed—to find out anything there was to be found out, in fact, in a gentlemanlike way. But Mr. Weston might just as well have tried to pump Lord Burleigh, or Lord Bacon, had he been contemporary and on pumping terms with those distinguished noblemen. Hubert Walgrave betrayed no more of the secrets of his inner man than if he had been deaf and dumb; and yet he was civil, aggravatingly civil, and left Weston at the gates of the station oppressed with a sense of failure.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. WALGRAVE RELIEVES HIS MIND.

MR. WALGRAVE dined again with his betrothed before the Vallorys left town; walked in the broad walk in Kensington-gardens with her one afternoon; rode to Wimbledon with her one morning;

and on Saturday had the privilege of seeing her off by the Eastbourne train—express the greater part of the way—with her father and her own maid, Tullion, a tall strong-minded female, of superior birth and education—superior to her status of lady's-maid, that is to say—whose parents had suffered reverses, and who was very fond of holding forth upon the luxuries and amenities of her early home.

All the luggage had gone the day before. Tullion only carried her mistress's dressing-bag, in case Miss Vallory should be seized with a desire to use her ivory-backed hair-brushes, or her ivory glove-stretchers, or to write a letter between London and Eastbourne. The dressing-bag contained everything that could have been wanted during a trip to America; but it was Tullion's duty to be prepared for all emergencies. One footman and a cover of housemaids had gone down the day before; the cook, butler, and another man came second class by this train, after serving a ceremonious luncheon in Acropolis-square, in order that there should be no hitch in the domestic arrangements of either town or sea-side—no awkward hiatus in Mr. Vallory's state. His own brougham brought him to the London station; his own barouche would meet him at Eastbourne. The lovers had ten minutes' leisure at the station, in which to renew their vows of eternal constancy, had they been so minded; but being neither of them sentimentally disposed, they beguiled the time by conversation of a commonplace order. Only towards the last did Miss Vallory touch upon personal topics.

'How soon are we to see you, Hubert?' she asked.

'I think in the course of next week; but I had better not pledge myself to a given day. You may be sure I shall come directly I can. And I shall run down by this 3.30 train, and take my chance of finding you at home when I arrive.'

'I cannot understand why you should not come down at once, and stay with us altogether.'

'That is as much as to say you cannot understand why I am not an utterly idle man, my dear Augusta.'

'I don't wish you to idle; but at this time of year you really cannot have any serious work.'

'You heard what your father said about Cardium *v.* Cardium.'

The bell rang before Miss Vallory could argue the point any farther. Her place had been taken by Tullion, the maid, who travelled in the same carriage as her mistress, in case Miss Vallory should faint, or require the ivory hair-brushes, or wrench a button off her glove. Hubert Walgrave handed her to her place, lingered at the carriage-door to say a word or two, pressed the daintily-gloved hand in the orthodox fashion, and stood with lifted hat while the Eastbourne-Bognor-Lewes train steamed slowly off. When it was quite

game, he loitered on the platform for a minute or so, in a thoughtful mood, and then carried himself and his perplexities away in a hansom.

In spite of all he had said to Miss Vallory, he did not work very diligently in the interests of his Cardimums that Saturday afternoon. He seemed to have an idle fit upon him, and loitered about in a desultory way; tried to read for an hour or so in his rooms by the river; but ended by throwing his books aside savagely; and went out of doors again, strolling westward, in an utterly purposeless and unprofitable manner, thinking—thinking of a Kentish homestead, and one fair young face; not the face of which he had a right to think.

In Cockspur-street he came to a sudden halt, his listless eye caught by the glitter of a jeweller's window. The dazzling wares were displayed, though London was empty, and the world of Cockspur-street had in a manner ceased to exist—had entered upon its annual hibernation. Locketts and bracelets, brooches and earrings, twinkled in the radiance of the westward sloping sun; marvellous devices in coral courted the eye of the connoisseur; a chaste selection of diamonds hinted at the wealth within. Mr. Walgrave, who was not given to gaping before shop windows, made a dead stop at this, staring at the splendid follies meditatively.

'I should like to give her something,' he said to himself; 'something as a—as a souvenir. I have caused her only too much pain; why should I not give her one half-hour of innocent pleasure? And it comes natural to a woman to be fond of these things. But I think she would hardly care for anything unless there were a sentiment associated with it. A locket, for instance—I suppose that would be the right kind of thing—a locket, with my photograph in it. She is simple enough and loving enough to value my unworthy countenance. And I am rather better-looking in a photograph than in the flesh—that is one comfort. There are some men whom the sun always shows at their worst, exaggerating every wrinkle; but me Helios treats kindly.'

He had almost decided the point to his own satisfaction, and was going into the shop, when he stopped suddenly, turned on his heel, and walked a few paces farther, still meditating.

'How about aunt Hannah?' he asked himself. 'There's the rub. If I were to send Grace my likeness, she must surely see it. What is there which those piercing eyes of hers do not see? And yet I must be the clumsiest of Lotharios if I can't cheat aunt Hannah. What were such sharp-eyed all-seeing people created for, except to be duped egregiously, sooner or later? Yes; I think I am a match for aunt Hannah.'

He turned back again, and this time went straight to the jeweller's counter. He selected a locket—the handsomest, or the one that pleased him best, in the shop: a massive dead-gold locket, oval,

with an anchor in large rich-looking pearls on the back ; such a jewel as a man would scarcely choose for a farmer's daughter, unless he had sunk very far down that pit from which extrication is so difficult and so rare. He turned the locket over in his fingers thoughtfully after he had chosen and paid for it.

'I suppose, now,' he said to the shopman, 'you could make me a false back to this thing, and put a portrait into it in such a manner that its existence need only be known to the owner of the locket?'

The shopman replied diffusely, to the effect that the thing was practicable, but would be troublesome, requiring great nicety of adjustment, and so on, and so on, and would be, of course, expensive.

'I don't care about a pound or two, more or less,' said Mr. Walgrave. 'I should like the thing done, if it can be done neatly. There must be a secret spring, you understand, in the style one reads about in novels. I never saw it in real life ; but I have a fancy for trying the experiment. You can send to me for the photograph in a day or two ; and the sooner you can let me have the locket the better.'

He tossed his card on to the counter and departed, more interested in this trifling purchase than he had been in anything for a long time.

'It is a relief to do something that will please her,' he thought.

It was a relief ; but he was not the less restless and uneasy. The Cardium case had no charm for him. New briefs, which had accumulated during the last fortnight of his absence, failed to interest him. He had been less than a week away from Brierwood, yet it seemed as if that ancient garden in Kent were divided from him by the space of a lifetime. His common life, which until this time had seemed to him all-sufficient for a man's happiness, was out of tune.

He hardly knew what to do with himself. After the excuses he had made about Eastbourne he could not go abroad ; yet he would like to have rushed headlong to some wild out-of-the-way village in the Tyrol, and to spend his autumn climbing unfamiliar mountains. He fancied he could get rid of his infatuation in some remote region such as that ; but chained to London, in the dull dead season of the year, there was no hope of cure. Grace Redmayne's image haunted him by day and by night, mixed itself with every dream, came between him and his books, pushed Cardium *v.* Cardium from their stools.

Would he not have been safer at Eastbourne, in the society of his affianced, living the life of gentility by the seaside ? He could hardly fail to ask himself this question. Yes ; he would be safer, most assuredly, walking that narrow pathway, his footsteps guarded from all possibility of wandering. He would be safer ; but he felt that such a life just now would be simply unendurable. The commonplace talk, the narrow mind—narrow though it was stored with

day lines from Tennyson and Owen Meredith, and had been enriched by a careful perusal of every book which a young lady of position ought to read; narrow, although its culture during the educational period had cost from two to three hundred a year—from these he shrank as from a pestilence; in plain words, he felt that an unbroken week of his future wife's company would be the death of him.

And when they were married, what then? Well, then, of course, it would be different. No man—above all a successful barrister—could see enough of his wife to be bored by her companionship. Nor can a man's wife, unless she is inherently obnoxious to him, ever be utterly uninteresting. They have so many ideas in common, so many plans and arrangements—petty, perhaps, but still absorbing for the moment—to discuss and settle,—the list of guests for a dinner-party; the way-bill of their autumn pilgrimage; the name of their last baby; the pattern of new carpets; the purchase or non-purchase of a picture at Christie's. The wife is only a necessary note—the subdominant—in the domestic scale.

But the long days of courtship, when there is no fervent love in the soul of the lover; the long summer evenings, when he is bound to stroll with his chosen one by the calm gray sea; when to talk too much of his own prospects and plan of life would be to appear worldly; when he is bound, in fact, to complete his tale of love-making, to produce the given number of bricks with ever so little straw—those days are the days of trial; and happy is he who can pass through them unscathed to that solemn morning which clenches the bargain with joyous ringing of bells, and gay procession of bridesmaids, and Mendelssohn's Wedding March, and transforms the expecting betrothed into the submissive wife.

'I have not the slightest doubt we shall get on very well together when we are married,' Mr. Walgrave said to himself; 'but the preliminary stage is up-hill work. I know that Augusta is fond of me, in her way; but O, what a cold way it seems after the touch of Grace Redmayne's little hand, the look in Grace Redmayne's eyes! Thank God, I did my duty in that affair, and was open and above-board from the first.'

There was nothing in the world to delay Mr. Walgrave's visit to Eastbourne during the following week, except his own caprice; but he had a fancy for waiting until that locket he had bought in Cockspur-street was ready for him. He selected the photograph which represented him at his best, had it carefully painted by an expert hand, and sent it to the jeweller. At the end of the week the locket was brought to him. The spring worked admirably. On opening the golden case, there appeared a bunch of forget-me-nots in blue and white; but on pressing a little knob between the locket and the spring, and to it, the dainty little enamelled picture opened like

the back of a watch, and revealed Hubert Walgrave's miniature. The contrivance was perfect in its way, the forget-me-nots a happy thought. The man to whom the work had been intrusted had taken the liberty to suppose that the trinket must needs be a love-gift.

Hubert Walgrave was charmed with the toy, and had it packed, registered, and dispatched at once to 'Miss Redmayne, Brierwood Farm, near Kingsbury, Kent.' He wrote the address, and posted the little packet with his own hands, and then wrote Grace a formal letter, a letter which could bear the scrutiny of Mrs. Redmayne.

'My dear Miss Redmayne,—I experienced so much kindness from your family and yourself during my very pleasant visit to Brierwood, that I have been anxious to send you some little souvenir of that event. I know that young ladies are fond of trinkets, and I fancy that your kind aunt would prefer my sending my little offering to you, rather than to herself. I have therefore chosen a locket, which I trust Mr. and Mrs. Redmayne will permit you to accept, in token of my gratitude for all the kindness I received under their hospitable roof.

'With all regards, I remain, my dear Miss Redmayne, very faithfully yours,
HUBERT WALGRAVE.'

He read the letter over, and blushed, ever so faintly, at his own hypocrisy. Yet what could he do? he wanted to give the dear girl just one little spark of pleasure. Upon a slip of paper he wrote: '*Il y a un ressort entre l'anneau et le médaillon; touchez le, et vous trouverez mon portrait;*' and enclosed the slip in his letter. Grace would open her own letter, no doubt, and the Redmaynes would hardly see that little slip of paper in an unknown tongue.

'And so ends the one romantic episode in my unromantic life,' he said to himself, when he had posted the letter.

A day or two afterwards he made up his mind to pay that duty visit to Eastbourne; it was a thing that must be done sooner or later. It was already much later than Miss Vallory could possibly approve. He expected to be lectured, and went down to the quiet watering-place with a chastened spirit, foreseeing what awaited him.

The little sea-coast town, with its umbrageous boulevards and dainty villas, was looking very gay and bright as he drove through it on his way to the habitation of the Vallorys, of course one of the largest and most expensive houses fronting the summer sea. One of the newest also: the bricks had still a raw look; the stucco appeared to have hardly dried after the last touch of the mason's trowel. Other houses of the same type straggled a little way beyond it, in a cheerless and unfinished condition. It looked almost as if the Acropolis-square mansion had been brought down by rail, and set up here with its face to the sea. The unfinished houses, of the

ne pattern, seemed to have strayed off into a field, where the unge scentless flora of the sea-coast, chiefly of the birch-broomer, still flourished. It was what Sydney Smith has called the 'knuckle-end' of Eastbourne, but designed to become the Belgravia of that town. Was not Belgravia itself once a 'knuckle-end'?

There was a drawing-room, spacious enough for a church, sely furnished with 'our cabriole suite at seven-and-thirty eas, in carved Italian walnut and green rep;' a balcony that ld have accommodated a small troop of infantry; and everywhere same aspect of newness and rawness. The walls still smelt of r first coat of paint, and plaster-of-paris crumbs fell from the ngs now and then in a gentle shower.

The Acropolis-square footman ushered Mr. Walgrave to the draw-room, where he found his betrothed trying a new piece on a new rd grand, in a new dress — an elaborate costume of primrose bric, all frillings and puffings and flutings, which became her tall figure. She wore a broad blue ribbon round her throat, with cket hanging from it—a locket of gold and gems, her own monom in sapphires and diamonds; and the sight of it reminded him of t other locket. Grace Redmayne had received his gift by this e; but there had been no acknowledgment of it as yet when he left don. Indeed, no letter from Brierwood could reach him directly, e he had never given the Redmaynes his London address. They ld only write to him through John Wort.

Mr. Walgrave had not been mistaken about the impending lee- e, but he took his punishment meekly, only murmuring some t reference to *Cardium versus Cardium*—so meekly, in fact, t Augusta Vallory could scarcely be hard upon him.

'You may imagine,' she remonstrated in conclusion, 'that I find lace of this kind very dull without you.'

'I am afraid you will find it much duller with me,' Mr. Wal- ve replied drearily; 'whatever capacity for gaiety I may possess hich, at the best, I fear, is not much—is always paralysed by sea-side. I have enjoyed a day or two at Margate, certainly, e or twice in my life; there is something fresh and enjoyable t Margate; an odour of shrimps and high spirits; but then, rgate is considered vulgar, I believe.'

'Considered vulgar!' cried Miss Vallory with a shudder. 'Why, s Houndsditch by the sea!'

'If Margate were in the Pyrenees, people would rave about it,' lover replied coolly. 'I have been happy at Ryde, as you know,' vent on in his most leisurely manner, but with a little drop in his e, which he had practised on juries sometimes in breach-of-pro- e cases, and which did duty for tenderness; 'but with those two options, I have found the sea-side—above all, the genteel sea-side failure. The more genteel, the more dreary. If one does not

admit Houndsditch and the odour of shrimps, the pestilence of dullness is apt to descend upon our coasts. Cowes, of course, is tolerable; and I rather like Southsea—the convicts are so interesting; and where there are ships in the offing, there is always amusement for the Cockney who prides himself upon knowing a brig from a brigantine.'

Discoursing in this languid manner, the lovers beguiled the time until dinner. Mr. Walgrave was not eager to rush down to the beach and gather shells, or to seek some distant point whence to take a header into the crisp blue waves, after the manner of the enthusiastic excursionist, who feels that while he is at the sea he cannot have too much of a good thing. He lounged in the balcony, which was pleasantly sheltered by a crimson-striped awning, and talked in his semi-cynical way to his betrothed, not by any means over-exerting himself in the endeavour to entertain her.

'The Arion is here, I suppose,' he remarked by and by.

'Yes. I have been out in her a good deal.'

'With your father?'

'Not very often. Papa gives himself up to laziness at the seaside. I have had Weston with me.'

'Happy Weston!'

'As the happiness he may have enjoyed was quite open to you, I don't think you need affect to envy him.'

'My dear Augusta, I envy him not only the happiness, but the capacity for enjoying it. You see, I am not the kind of man for a "tame cat." Weston Vallory is; indeed, to my mind, he seems to have been created to fill the position of a fine Persian with a bushy tail, or an Angora with pink eyes.'

'You are remarkably complimentary to my relations at all times,' said Miss Vallory with an offended air.

'My dear girl, I consider the mission of a tame cat quite a lofty one in its way; but you see it doesn't happen to be my way. A man who trains his whiskers as carefully as your cousin Weston, lays himself out for that sort of thing. Have you been far out?'

'We have been as far as the Wight. We went to the regatta at Ryde the other day, and had luncheon with the Filmers, who are intensely grateful for the villa.'

'Then my Lady Clara Vere de Vere has not found the time heavy on her hands.'

'Not particularly. I have ridden a good deal.'

'With Weston?'

'With Weston. You envy him *that* privilege, I suppose?' This with a little contemptuous toss of the splendid head, and an angry flash of the fine black eyes. If Hubert Walgrave had been in love with his future wife, that little angry look would have seemed more bewitching to him than the sweetest smile of a plainer woman; but

there was another face in his mind, eyes more beautiful than these, which had never looked at him angrily. He contemplated Augusta Vallory as coolly as if she had been a fine example of the Spanish school of portraiture—a lady by Velasquez.

'Upon my honour, I think you grow handsomer every time I see you,' he said; 'but if you ask me whether I envy Weston the delight of riding through dusty lanes in August, I am bound to reply in the negative. Man is essentially a hunting animal, and to ride without anything to ride after seems to me unutterably flat. If we were in the shires now, in November, I should be happy to hazard my neck three or four days a week in your society.'

'But you see it is not November; if it were, I have no doubt I should be told the duties of a barrister must prevent your wasting any time upon me during that month.'

With such gentle bickerings the lovers beguiled the time until the ringing of the dressing bell, when Miss Vallory handed her affianced over to the custody of the chief butler, and went upstairs to array herself for the small family gathering. Mr. Walgrave found himself presently in a roomy bedchamber—walls and ceiling painfully new, grate slightly at variance with its setting, bells a failure, windows admirably constructed for excluding large bodies of air and admitting draughts, furniture of the popular seaside type—brand-new Kidderminster carpet of a flaring pattern, rickety Arabian bedstead, mahogany wardrobe with doors that no human power could keep shut, everything marble-topped that could be marble-topped; no pincushion, no easy-chair, no writing-table, and a glaring southern sun pouring upon a barren desert of Kidderminster.

'So Weston has been very attentive—has been doing my duty, in short,' Mr. Walgrave said to himself as he dressed. 'I wonder whether there's any chance of his cutting me out; and if he did, should I be sorry? It would be one thing for me to jilt Augusta, and another for her to throw me over. Old Vallory would hardly quarrel with me in the latter event; on the contrary, it would be a case for solatium. He could hardly do enough for me to make amends for my wrongs. But I don't think there's much danger from my friend Weston; and after all, I have quite done with that other ally—put it out of my mind, as a dream that I have dreamed.'

He went downstairs presently, and found Mr. Vallory in the shaving-room, large and stolid, with a vast expanse of shirt-front, and a double gold eye-glass on the knob of his aquiline nose, reading an evening paper.

This of course offered a delightful opening for conversation, and they began to talk in the usual humdrum manner of the topics of the hour. Parliament was over—it was the indignant-letter season, and the papers were teeming with fervid protests against nothing particular. Extortionate innkeepers in the Scottish highlands, vaccina-

tion *versus* non-vaccination, paterfamilias bewailing the inordinate length of his boys' holidays, complaints of the administration of the army, outcries for reform in the navy, jostled one another in the popular journals; and Mr. Vallory, being the kind of man who reads his newspaper religiously from the beginning to the end, had plenty to say about these things.

He was a heavy pompous kind of man, and Mr. Walgrave found his society a dead weight at all times; but never had he seemed so entirely wearisome as on this particular August evening, when less aristocratic Eastbourne was pacing the parade gaily, breathing the welcome breeze that set landwards with the sinking of the sun. Hubert Walgrave felt as if he could have walked down some of his perplexities, had he been permitted to go out and tramp the lonely hills, Beachy Head way, in the sunset; but in that lodging-house drawing-room, sitting on the creaky central ottoman contemplating his boots, while Mr. Vallory's voice droned drearily upon the subject of army reform, and 'what we ought to do with our Armstrong guns, sir,' and so on, and so on, his troubles sat heavy upon him.

Weston came in presently, the very pink and pattern of neatness, with the narrowest possible white tie, and the air of having come to a dinner-party. He had slipt down by the afternoon express, he told his uncle, after his day's work in the City.

'There's an attentive nephew!' exclaimed Mr. Vallory senior; 'does a thorough day's work in the Old Jewry, and then comes down to Eastbourne to turn over the leaves of his cousin's music, while I take my after-dinner nap, and is off to the City at a quarter to eight in the morning, unless he's wanted here for yachting or riding. Take care he doesn't cut you out, Walgrave.'

'If I am foredoomed to be cut out,' Mr. Walgrave answered with his most gracious smile, 'Mr. Weston Vallory is welcome to his chance of the advantages to be derived from the transaction. But the lady who has honoured me by her choice is in my mind as much above suspicion as Cæsar's wife ought to have been.'

The young lady who was superior to Cæsar's wife came into the room at this moment, in the freshest and crispest of white muslin dresses, dotted about with peach-coloured satin bows, just as if a flight of butterflies had alighted on it. She gave Weston the coolest little nod of welcome. If he had really been a favourite Persian cat, she would have taken more notice of him. He had brought her some music, and a batch of new books, and absorbed her attention for ten minutes, telling her about them; at the end of which time dinner was announced, to Mr. Walgrave's infinite relief. He gave Augusta his arm, and the useful Weston was left to follow his uncle, caressing his whiskers meditatively as he went, and inwardly anathematising Hubert Walgrave's insolence.

The dinner at Eastbourne was as the dinners in Acropolis.

square. Mr. Vallory's butler was like Mr. Merdle's, and would not take an ounce of plate for any consideration whatever; would have laid his table with the same precision, one might suppose, if he had been laying it in Pompeii the night of the eruption, with an exact foreknowledge that he and his banquet-table were presently to be drowned in a flood of lava. So the table sparkled with the same battalions of wine-glasses; the same property tankards, which no one ever drank from, blazed upon the sideboard, supported by a background of presentation salvers; the same ponderous silver dishes went round in ceremonial procession, with the entrées which Mr. Walgrave knew by heart. Mr. Vallory's cook was an accomplished matron, with seventy guineas a year for her wages; but she had not the inexhaustible resources of an Oude or a Gouffé, and Hubert Walgrave was familiar with every dish in her catalogue, from her *consommé aux œufs* to her apple-fritters. He ate his dinner, however, watched over with tender solicitude by the chief butler and his subordinates—ate his dinner mechanically, with his thoughts very far away from that seaside dining-room.

After dinner came music and a little desultory talk; a little loitering on the balcony, to watch the harvest moon rise wide and golden over a rippling sea; then a quiet rubber for the gratification of Mr. Vallory; then a tray with brandy and seltzer, sherry and soda, a glass of either refreshing mixture compounded languidly by the two young men; and then a general good-night.

'I suppose you would like to go out in the Arion to-morrow,' Augusta said to her lover, as he held the drawing-room door open for her departure.

'I should like it above all things,' replied Mr. Walgrave; and he did indeed feel as if, tossing hither and thither on that buoyant sea, he might contrive to get rid of some part of his burden.

'It is a species of monomania,' he said to himself, 'and I dare say is as much the fault of an overworked brain as an actual affair of the heart. Who can tell what form a man's punishment may take if he drives the intellectual steam-engine just a little too hard? The truth is, I want more rest and complete change. I wish to Heaven I could get away to the Tyrol; but that's impossible, I am bound hand and foot, unless I like to fly in the face of fortune, and offend Augusta Vallory.'

He did not fly in the face of fortune. He went out in the Arion on the next day and the next, and even rode Weston's chestnut mare in the dusty lanes, to oblige Miss Vallory, while the owner of the beast sat in an office, where the thermometer was at seventy-five, writing rough drafts of letters to be copied by inferior hands, and interviewing important clients. They went to Pevensey Castle together, and dawdled about among the ruined walls. They went to Beachy Head, and heard wondrous stories of distressed

barks and rescued cargoes, from the guardians of the point. They got rid of the days in a manner that ought to have been delightful to both of them, since they were almost always together, and Mr Walgrave made himself more agreeable than usual.

This lasted for about ten days ; but at the end of the tenth he discovered suddenly that he must go back to Cardimum *versus* Cardimum, and stuff his brain with more precedents ; nor would he listen to any arguments which Miss Vallory could urge to detain him. She submitted ultimately, and made no show of her regret ; but she really was grieved and disappointed, for she was fonder of him than she cared to let him see.

NATURE'S JEWELS

THE orchard-lands are all a-glow with gems,
Rich perfumed gems, from Nature's casket strown—
Pearls on the pear, on apple opals pink ;
Rich rubies on the quince, and amethysts
Upon the peach and almond : fairer gems
Than light the sceptre of the proudest throne.

The scarlet blush sits on the queenly blooms
Of the pomegranate, and the whitening buds
Of April snow-showers flake the jargonelle ;
Here the pink blossoms of the glorious peach,
Superb sultana, mingle with the flowers
Of the retiring tender apricot ;
And there the quince her fragrant petals hides
Beneath the shadow of the damascene.

Show'd ever iris in prismatic bow
More gorgeous mingling of a thousand hues
Than show the orchards ? whilst the trellised wall
Glow's 'neath the stars of yellow jessamine
In natural topaz, and the sapphire gleams
In heaven's unclouded ceiling purely blue ?

Jewels, rich jewels, fair and sweet and rare,
Renew'd from year to year ; jewels all sweet,
That cost nor toiling days nor sleepless nights
For gold to purchase them ; jewels on which
The humblest eye may gaze, the poor and rich
May both alike have share ; gems which when dead
Leave a rich legacy of fruits to earth,
And with the spring reviving bloom again !

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

IMAGINARY LONDON

A delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

III. BRAIN-STREET, E.C.

'How oft have my old feet stumbled at graves!' murmurs Friar Lawrence as he gropes, lantern in hand, through the churchyard in that last sad scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. For how many years, I wonder, have I known Brain-street, one of the most Imaginary thoroughfares in London? The years must be many, for I feel my feet beginning to stumble now over the tombs of Brain-street. When I tread its pavement I seem to be walking among ghosts, and in its shops and newspaper offices my fancy sees as many sepulchres as there are tombs upon the Appian Way. Brain-street! It is my own life, my whole life; and to him who is blest or cursed with a memory the Life-Path must needs be strewn with head-stones, and peopled with phantoms, always.

And yet, for all the length of time during which I have been familiar with Brain-street, I am far from knowing it by heart. On which side of the way is Dictionary-court? I cannot rightly tell. Does Swan-court come before Lock-court, and how many courts are there between the last-named passage and Wine-bottle-court? Ask me not, for I am unable to answer. There are some things which we may be perpetually iterating, but which we never learn, for lack of getting them, once for all, by heart, as a lesson. I question whether a cemetery chaplain could repeat the Burial Service without book. Set me, as a task, to learn the names of all the Scotch burghs, or half a column of Births, Marriages, and Deaths in the *Times*, and I will wager that when I have once gotten them into my head, they shall abide there; but I might cursorily glance at them fifty thousand times without being able to enumerate them *verbatim*. I remember once on board a ship, far at sea, that an astute American passenger made much sport and a considerable number of dollars, as we were killing time over our midnight cigars in the capstan-house, by wagering that no one in company could give, *viva voce*, a complete list of the whole of Shakespeare's plays. All he challenged were men of tolerable, and some were of extensive culture; yet all failed to the extent of a play or two. Try the experiment, you who read this. I think that I broke down by the omission either of *Pericles* or of *Titus Andronicus*; but the usual collapse was over the Third Part of *King Henry VI*. The which, I take it, distinguishes man from the parrot. Your clever Poll will learn the catalogue of all Homer's ships, merely by hearing them cursorily repeated; but strive to *teach*

the tabulation to Poll, and you will fail dismally in drumming it into her head. I am compelled, in the course of my business, to hire about a thousand hansom cabs in the course of every year, yet there are not a dozen instances in which I actually know the distance and the fare between one point and another. I must have been fifty times at Cologne, but I do not know the name of the station before or of the station behind it. Do you? Can you tell me the number on the inner case of the watch which you have had for twenty years, and which you wind up every night? I will go farther. Does one gentleman or lady in a thousand know, from first to last, the words of 'God save the Queen'? This brief digression concerning the minor phenomena of memory will not, I hope, be deemed impertinent when the subject of this paper is borne in mind; for without memory and its kindred faculties, where would Brain-street be? The whole Life and Being of the place depend on the exercise of the human intellect. The handicrafts and mechanical industries which are pursued in its narrow courts and tortuous alleys have all a direct connection with brainwork. A vast proportion of its male frequenters live by their wits; and on the wits of the wits many of the reputable merchants and dealers of Brain-street flourish. The road is paved with authors' skulls, cemented with spinal marrow. There is speculation in the gas-lamps; the mind's eye shines from the policeman's bullseye. If anybody reels in Brain-street late at night, going homewards, it is because he has been overtaxing his mental powers. The women of Brain-street are all intellectual. No vapid Girls of the Period are seen there; at least, habitually. Rather are strong-minded ladies in spectacles, intent on finding publishers for pamphlets in which new modes of utilising the sewage of large towns are propounded, or suggestions are made for rubbing the tails of the cats with which Mr. Calcraft castigates the garroters with a mixture of crushed wasps and powdered glass. If any pretty young damsels are visible in Brain-street, they must be either writers of three-volume novels or artists who draw on wood for illustrated periodicals. Don't run away with the notion that the buxom young women you see trooping out of the courts of Brain-street between twelve and one in the day are milliners' girls, or mantle-makers, or sewing-machine 'hands.' They are book-binders and folders; and if they sew anything at all, it is on the backs of magazines that their needles are plied. There are many coffee-shops in Brain-street, and many more public-houses; but they minister to no vulgar tipplers; they subserve the wants of the brain-workers. They furnish the temperate sub-editor with his midnight tea-and-toast, the intemperate newspaper-hack with his beloved drams, the thirsty compositor with his eternal beer.

I must frankly admit, however, that the fine-flowing course of intellect in Brain-street is, at one of its extremities, corrupted. From the two gates of a huge hive inhabited by the men of bombazeen and

powder, of parchment and foolscap, of red tape and green ferret in that dingy caravanserai to the right of the Bar looking eastward and once the abode of the monkish Knights, 'till they de-through pride,' gushes right across Brain-street into Beelzebub—the muddy river of Law. It is not confluent with the Castalian. It cuts, and perturbs, and poisons it. You will tell me that is a learned profession, and that without brain there can be no notion. There *can*—from a 'professional' point of view. No doubt there have been lawyers who were ripe and discriminative scholars; as a body, lawyers are—with the exception of actors and clergy—the least learned race of men on the face of this earth. I admire their industry in wrestling with and their cunning in explaining the monstrous Legend of the Law; but beyond its narrow scope—a day in any court of justice will prove the truth of that—I advance—the mental acquirements of lawyers are rarely of the order to fit them for association with the meditative, lucubramental, and creative minds of Brain-street. I wish heartily that the Honourable Societies of the Inner and Middle Capharnaum would brick-up the streets which give on Brain-street, and finding an issue from their city den on to the Thames Embankment, go round by Arundel-street when they wish to repair to the High Court of Quiddities in Chancery Inn. If they purpose towards Westminster Hall, there is a station of the Underground Railway conveniently contiguous to their destination. The dimly-lit carriages, the mephitic atmosphere, should be to them admirably. But no; they must needs impinge on Brain-street, and in the most arrogant and turbulent manner. Peaceful and unobtrusive passing through the Bar with their pockets full of epics and romances, which they are bent on offering to the open-handed bibliomaniacs of Brain-street, find themselves hustled and jostled by the loud-tongued and brazen-faced men of law, who, in rusty stuff-gowns and black bands, and exposing their wigs in the broad daylight in the shameless manner, dart across Brain-street into Beelzebub-battling the keys of deed-boxes, or the fees wrung from poor clients in the pockets of their checked trousers, or carrying beneath their arms dog's-eared sheaves of tape-tied foolscap, as full of lies as a sack of taph, and ironically termed 'briefs.' The poet is dreaming of images, or mentally counting hendecasyllables on his fingers, when he is affrighted by the harsh grating voice of Blubberly, Q.C., of 'specific performance,' or by the Dublin 'Jackeen' of a lawless junior retailing to a judge's clerk (with a red bag fraught with voice to thousands) the latest morsel of scandal from the Old Sessions. In Beelzebub-lane these evil creatures find spirits still. Attorneys wait for them at Clifford's Inn, by Southwark-buildings, and by Lincoln's low-browed porch. There they meet, there they foregather.

A law bookseller and a law stationer purvey in Brain-street,

hard by the Bar, to such literary wants as the vampires of Law experience. Did it never strike you that law-books were not like unto other books—nay, that to a certain extent they could scarcely be called books at all? Apart from their peculiar binding—apparently made of the skins of clients, roughly tanned—they have a special and particular odour. Nor is the punctuation of legal works similar to the pointing of works of miscellaneous literature. The pages are full of uncanny colons, delusive dashes, and angular brackets that shut in the sense as with hasps and staples of steel. I read Law pretty sedulously, just as I read books about botany, or love, or medicine, or the 'Brewer's Assistant and Distiller's Guide,' or the 'Belfast Town and County Almanac;' but I never rise from the perusal of a legal tome without the dread that I have incurred some pecuniary liability thereby; without a carking fear lest next day Messrs. Gorgon and Demagorgon, of Bolivorax-street, Beelzebub-lane, should write me a sharp stern letter demanding, under threats of immediate proceedings in case of default, payment of a sum which I have already paid six times over, and which is now six times the amount I originally owed.

I bear not so high a hatred to the lawyers' clerks who trot about Brain-street. It is difficult to be very angry with the lesser demons. In Ben Jonson's play one cannot help laughing at and sympathising with Pug. But it is the Great 'Boss' Devil, the Major Fiend, the Lord Chief Justice of Tophet that we loathe. A poor little devil of an attorney's clerk, who came to serve me with a writ once, asked me in a subdued manner after he had done his office, if I could oblige him with my autograph. 'Do you want to put "I O U Fifty Pounds" over the signature, and sue me on the security?' I asked with brutal irony. The poor little process-server winced; and I felt that I had said a shameful thing,—that I had used this dependent fiend as cruelly as Sterne used the Franciscan friar. 'I've read every one of your books,' answered the little lawyer's clerk humbly, 'and I like you; and this matter of Bloudbolter's [Bloudbolter was the plaintiff] isn't my fault.' I gave him the required scrap of writing; and I hope from the bottom of my heart that, as his literary likings were developed, his legal leanings grew weaker. I hope that he speedily made up his mind his father's soul to cross, and to pen a stanza when he should engross; that he showed the office in Thavies Inn a clean pair of heels, and so took to literature. We 'take to literature' as we 'take to' driving a hearse or sweeping a crossing. Letters are the last resource of the shiftless; and Alsatia—the Blue Friars still skirt the boundaries of Brain-street—is an intellectual *refugium peccatorum*. Thus, I complain not of the daily crowds of lawyers' clerks I meet. They have youth, they have hunger, in their favour. They are brands, and may be snatched from the burning. Cæsar was rescued from the stews of Rome to

conquer the world, and Benjamin Disraeli slipped from a three-legged stool in a lawyer's office to become Prime Minister of England. I hope they take in *Belgravia* at the coffee-house where lawyers' clerks do most resort. 'One convert,' said St. Francis Xavier, 'is worth ten thousand years of life for me.' If I could only discover that I had persuaded one attorney's clerk to pitch pounce and parchment, ferret and tape, to the infernals, and woo the Muses, I should be happy. It is true that a man may propose to all the Nine Muses, and be rejected by them, one after the other; but there remain the Pierides—very nice girls, and not at all proud.

These words 'do most resort' remind me of the existence of the famous tavern close to the Bar, to the left—the tavern concerning whose gallinaceous sign, whose plump head-waiter, whose proper chops, whose perfect pints of stout, Alfred Tennyson has written one of the freshest, manliest, and (in parts) the most pathetic of his lyrics. The world-renowned 'Rooster' was perhaps, in the days when Will Waterproof drank his port, and mused over his monologue there, a favourite place of rendezvous; but it has been long since given up to the lawyers. Who are the guests patronising the 'Mitre' and the 'Bishop's Shovel' and 'Bob's Coffee-house'—if indeed 'Bob's' has not been pulled down altogether—I do not know; and it is even marvellous to me that the 'Rooster' itself, which, according to the bard, once 'raked in golden barley,' should have escaped the extensive demolitions which have taken place on either side the Bar, in view of the erection at some future date of the Palace of Litigation (Carrion-street site). They tell me that the first stone of the new palace will be laid by the Wandering Jew, assisted by Chief-Baron Methusaleh, at the end of the first February that has five Sundays in it—I mean the February following the Greek Kalends. The ceremony will be followed by a grand banquet, consisting entirely of fat oysters; and a generous distribution of oyster-shells will subsequently take place among a famished crowd of plaintiffs and defendants.

Authors and journalists then may occasionally visit the 'Rooster,' and, when settling with the waiter, may recall that 'eternal want of once which vexeth public men;' but they do not 'use' the house. It is too near the Middle and Inner Capharnaum; it is too close to Belzebub-lane and the Judge's Chambers in Greenacre's Inn, at which, ever since the passing of the Act 'for the Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt,' hapless debtors are summoned to show why they should not be sent to prison for six weeks. Surely that so-called 'Abolition' Act was of a nature humorous enough to make the fiends down yonder grin. The Corporation of London hastened to pull down Whitecross-street Prison, and by the demolition gained a valuable site for new buildings; and they sent the unhappy debtors to the felons' gaol at Holloway. I think that Act must have been

drawn by Tartuffe, and indorsed by Machiavel, Ignatius Loyola, and Doctor Cantwell.

The real Brain of Brain-street goes higher up for refreshment, high towards the regions of the 'Hari-Kari or Happy Dispatch' weekly newspaper; the 'Sporting Knife,' a racing journal of vast circulation—I remember when its office was that of the 'Ulcerated Times,' a pictorial print—high towards the precincts of those tremendously powerful diurnals, the 'Daily Terrifier,' the 'Oriflamme,' and the 'Morning Excisor.' Where the Brain-Power is most concentrated, and every stone has a sermon—or a paragraph—in it, there debouches from Brain-street Wine-bottle-court. The court itself is full of Brain-mechanism. The vast establishments of Messrs. Pewter and Antimony, typefounders (Alderman Antimony was Lord Mayor in the year '46); of Messrs. Quoin, Case, and Chappell, printers to the Board of Blue Cloth; of Messrs. Cutedge and Tree-calf, bookbinders; with the smaller industries of Scawper and Tint-tool, wood-engravers, and Treacle, Gluepot, and Lampblack, printing-roller makers, are packed together in the upper part of the court as closely as herrings in a cask. The 'Cheese' is at the Brain-street end. It is a little, lop-sided, wedged-up house, that always reminds you, structurally, of a high-shouldered man with his hands in his pockets. It is full of holes and corners, and cupboards and sharp turnings; and in ascending the stairs to the tiny smoking-room you must tread cautiously, if you would not wish to be tripped up by plates and dishes momentarily deposited there by furious waiters. The waiters at the Cheese are always furious. Old customers abound in the comfortable old tavern, in whose sanded-floored eating-rooms a new face is a rarity; and the guests and the waiters are the oldest of familiars. Yet the waiter seldom fails to bite your nose off as a preliminary measure when you proceed to pay him. How should it be otherwise, when on that waiter's soul there lies heavy a perpetual sense of injury caused by the savoury odour of steaks and 'muts' to follow; of cheese bubbling in tiny tins—the 'specialty' of the house; of floury potatoes and fragrant green peas; of cool salads and cooler tankards of bitter beer; of extra-creaming stout and goes of 'Cork' (the caseous name for whisky), and 'rack,' by which is meant gin; and, in the winter-time, of Irish stew and rumpsteak-pudding, glorious and grateful to every sense? To be compelled to run to and fro with these succulent viands from noon to late at night, without being able to spare time to consume them in comfort—where do waiters dine, and when, and how?—to be continually taking other people's money only for the purpose of handing it to other people—are not these grievances sufficient to cross-grain the temper of the mildest-mannered waiter? Wrath, then—but 'tis an innocuous ire after all—reigns paramount at the Cheese. Do you know Kit Marlowe's definition of anger in *Dr. Faustus*? 'I am Wrath; I had neither

nor mother. I leapt out of a lion's mouth when I was scarcely our old; and I have ever since run up and down the world with ease of rapiers, wounding myself when I could get none to fight al.' Somebody is always in a passion at the Cheese: either a owner because there is not fat enough on his 'point'-steak, or else there is too much bone in his mutton-chop; or else the waiter is wrath with the cook, or the landlord with the waiter, or the maid with all. Yes; there is a barmaid at the Cheese—a handsome barmaid mewed up in a box not much bigger than a birdcage, surrounded by groves of lemons, 'ones' of cheese, punchbowls, and tins of mushroom-catsup. She has a temper; and I should not like to dispute with her, lest she should quoit me over the head with a trench-ladle, having a William-the-Third guinea soldered in the back. Yet would it be strange indeed if this neat-handed Phillis were destitute of a temper. She is ceaselessly badgered by waiters. She has waiter on the brain. The keys of the cellar have entered her soul. So she sits in her cage, and rages at the serving-men as if they were a beauteous black panther. All this, however, is but the rage of love, and is wholly innocuous. The Cheese is one of the best-kept, the cheapest, and the most jovial taverns in London. Long live it flourish!

Let it be noted in candour that Law finds its way to the Cheese as well as Literature; but the Law is, as a rule, of the non-combatant and consequently harmless order. Literary men who have been called to the bar, but do not practise; briefless young barristers, who do not object to mingling with newspaper men; with a sprinkling of retired solicitors (amazing dogs, these, for old port-wine; the landlord has some of the same bin which served as Hippocrene to George Blackstone when he wrote his Commentaries),—these make up the legal element of the Cheese. Sharp attorneys in practice are not so common there. There is a legend that a process-server once came to a back-door to serve a writ; but being detected by a waiter, he was skilfully edged by that wary retainer into Wine-bottle-court, and he had to pass the person on whom he was desirous to inflict the 'Viceregal, by the grace &c.' Once in the court, he was set upon by a gang of inky-faced boys just released from the works of Messrs. Ball, Clarke, and Scraper, machine-printers, and by the skin of his teeth he escaped being converted into 'pie.' He fled ignominiously; he was pursued by a City policeman, the intelligent functionary being under the impression that he had just picked a pocket opposite the printer's office; and is supposed subsequently to have been built up like the Bastille de Beverley in the brickwork of the Fleet-ditch, what time the construction of the Metropolitan Railway was in progress.

You are not to imagine that—the lawyers apart—those who support the Cheese are exclusively the gentlemen popularly termed 'authors.' What is an author? I declare that I do not precisely

know. I never laid claim to being one myself—and this is no case of *nolo episcopari*. I am a journalist. I have had pointed out to me at public dinners and evening parties certain curious people who, I was given to understand, were 'authors.' Some of them were more than curious—they were wonderful; with wisps of hair hanging over their shoulders, or surrounding their otherwise bald pates with a fluffy halo, and with collars turned down to such an extent, that another half-inch turn might have reversed their innermost garments entirely. One weird creature of this kind told me that he could only compose during the night time, and that he lay for the major part of the day wrapped in a cloak, on a tiled floor, 'meditating.' Another—an extraordinary being, in a kind of cassock like a lay brother of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri—brought a guitar with him to a dinner-party in private life, and sang Spanish songs during the dessert. Another, with a red head so fiery that it might have served as a beacon-fire if the country was menaced by invasion, wanted me to come to his chambers in the Albany at eight o'clock some morning, to hear him read an essay giving a new exposition of the Inner Meaning of Shakespeare's Sonnets. I suppose that these mooncalves are really accepted in polite society as genuine representatives of the Republic of Letters, and I have not the slightest doubt that were a Royal Academy of Literature to be established—*absit omen!*—to-morrow, the man with the hair hanging over his shoulders, the creature who lay on the tiles in a cloak, the being in the cassock who sang 'La vaquera de la Finijosa' to the guitar, and the Fearful Presence with the red head, would be among the first-elected members of the Forty. I have it now. The people who go to the Literary Fund dinners must be authors. They certainly are not the kind of *littérateurs* who go to the Cheese.

I know a parliamentary reporter when I see one, and there are numerous representatives of the stenographic craft to be found at the Cheese,—especially on Wednesdays, on the evenings of which the House does not sit. Sundry leading-article writers, editors and sub-editors, musical, artistic, and theatrical critics likewise, I am aware of as among the 'oldest inhabitants' of the boxes in the dining-room. Still are there many more varieties of cerebrotypes to be met with in Wine-bottle-court. If you for one moment imagine that master-printers and machinists, typefounders and per-makers, booksellers and publishers, are exempt from the weaknesses of hunger and thirst,—that they are indifferent to creature comforts, or that they cannot appreciate well-done chops and steaming floury potatoes, and an occasional modicum of old port, or even a steaming bowl of 'rack' punch,—you are very much mistaken. Brain-street must live; and on the whole Brain-street lives, so far as the inner man is concerned, remarkably well, in a chirping, jocular, inoffensive, but still Imaginary manner.

A TEDIOUS TREAT

BETTER is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof, are among the words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem; and the words are specially applicable to the relief with which jaded human nature welcomes the close of some tedious treat. Shakespeare's tinker, though a poor critic, secures some of our sympathy when he inquires, with a yawn, after the very first scene of the play got up for his delectation, 'Comes there any more of it?' His attendants have observed him nodding; and the improvised lord, the translated tinker, is gently given to understand that they fear he does not mind the play. 'Yes, by St. Anne, do I,' protests Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath; by birth a pedlar, by education a bear-herd, by recent profession a tinker, and now by present translation a lord; and desirous of showing a taste, by grace of congruity with his station, he pronounces the play to be 'a good matter, surely;' but wistfully adds the note of interrogation, 'Comes there any more of it?' 'My lord, 'tis but begun,' answers the page. Whereupon Christopher Sly iterates his commendation of it as 'a very excellent piece of work;' but couples that commendation, in the same sentence and in the same breath, with this cordial *suspitium de profundis*, 'Would 'twere done!'

How many of us have a valued friend, the effect of whose visits to us uncomfortably recalls what Plutarch says of Pompey's feeling towards Cato,—that although he made much of him when present, he was glad when he was gone. And who but sympathises to the full with Madame de Longueville caught gaping over Chapelain's *Pucelle*, and when pressed to admire it, answering that yes, it was very fine, but also very tedious—'Oui, c'est bien beau, mais c'est bien ennuyeux.' Lord Chesterfield owns to almost a like impression as regards even Homer and Virgil. Of Homer he says, 'I admire his beauties; but, to tell you the truth, when he slumbers, I sleep.' 'Virgil, I confess, is all sense, and therefore I like him better than his model; but he is often languid, especially in his five or six last books, during which I am obliged to take a good deal of snuff.' A sound history, as it is called, has been likened to a sound sermon: as we button up our coats we pronounce it excellent, but we are glad when the time for buttoning up our coats has come. A pamphlet of the old-fashioned style is described by Mr. Fonblanque as a composition of much circumlocution, and a sort of stuff best known by the name of palaver: it is a thing of stateliness and decorum, and

two or three ideas pass slowly and solemnly along in a procession of winding phrases. The author is pictured as dancing a literary minuet before the public; leading out his subject, bowing to it, putting on and taking off his hat, flourishing now a leg, now an arm, and moving over a very small space of ground with a very vast ceremony and parade of action,—‘all wonderfully imposing and unspeakably tedious to behold.’ So with the *Allégories Parfumées* of Guillaume de Lorris, and the *Erudites Méchancetés* of Jehan de Meung, as witnessed on the stage by *seigneurs* and *clercs*, who went because others went, and tried to believe that dreary stuff amused them; but then, at the worst, as a modern critic says, they might have the satisfaction—it being such a select entertainment, *à huis clos*—of being bored fashionably, and of yawning in and with the best society. ‘Au pis-aller ils auraient eu la satisfaction de s’ennuyer à la mode et de bâiller comme il faut.’ On the other hand, the interest of the profane vulgar in the sacred plays then in vogue was inexhaustible; custom could not stale nor time wither it. Such a performance as the *Jeu de la Passion* would be stopped short at nightfall, in the middle of a scene,—or even, like Sir William Hamilton’s edition of Reid, in the middle of a sentence,—and would be resumed again next Sunday, without one of the spectators failing to appear; and so the performance would go on, sometimes for several months together, before a throng that betrayed neither fatigue nor impatience at the interminable drama.

Christopher Sly’s aspiration occurs to one, in reading Gibbon’s account of the Tanjou, the monarch of the Huns, being received at Sigan by the Emperor of China, with his mandarins and his troops, all paying the Tanjou all the honours that could adorn and disguise the triumph of Chinese vanity. Magnificent was the palace prepared for his reception, and high above all the princes of the royal family was the place assigned him; but the ‘patience of the barbarian king was exhausted by the ceremonies of a banquet, which consisted of eight courses of meat, and of nine solemn pieces of music.’ Each, no doubt, a very excellent piece of work; but would ‘twere done! Certain things in this world, excellent in their way, are charged with failing from their very completeness,—an encyclopedia being, for instance, the most wearisome book in the world, and the better and fuller it is, the more disheartening. The British Museum, again, has been referred to the same category; for a visit to it suggests agreeable task of reading Johnson’s Dictionary straight through and of mastering the *Encyclopædia Britannica* by a diligent conscientious alphabetical study of its contents. The British Museum, as it exists, is declared to be the standing bore of London; any paterfamilias will confess whose hardest of duties it is to go through that inevitable day of fate, when he must redeem the promise, always of an ancient date, to take his children to the Brit-

Museum.' Many are the travelled tourists who, in the act of 'doing' this or that superb sight, feel with Jeffrey that travelling, after all, is pleasanter when it is over than while it is going on. Too familiar are many of us with what are called the raptures of the guests at a severe musical party, where the pieces are long and scientific, and everybody says 'Beautiful!' and 'Treat indeed!' but at the same time puts up a hand to suppress or conceal a slight tendency to yawn. Thomas de Vaux is a plain man and a true when he tells *Cœur-de-Lion*, in the *Talisman*, that he would prefer his bed to hearing Blondel sing; and when Blondel does sing, and the other and more courtly courtiers affect ecstasy at the treat, this one plain man yawns tremendously, as one who submits to a wearisome penance. So, in another of the Waverley tales, when Sir Piercie Shafston, who always sings with his eyes half shut, opens them at the end of his 'recital,' it is to observe his audience for the most part asleep, their general feeling towards him being aptly enough suggested in Dame Glendinning's comment and query touching her superlatively fine guest,—'A pleasant gentleman, and sings a sweet song, though it is somewhat of the longest. Well, I make mine avow he is goodly company—I wonder when he will go away?' That is Christopher Sly's style all over. And while dealing with lip-deep compliments of this order, we might apply to the subject the message sent to Louis XI. by the ladies of Croye, through Quentin Durward, when they barely thanked his Majesty in cold-enough terms for his courtesy to them while at his court, but much more warmly for having permitted them to retire, and sent them in safety from his dominions.

When George Warrington, in *The Virginians*, relates his adventures by flood and field to Madame de Bernstein, that old lady nods off to sleep many times during the narration, only waking up when George pauses, saying it is most interesting, and ordering him to continue. 'Very good and most interesting, I am sure, my dear sir,' she repeats, towards the end of the recital, and putting up three pretty little fingers, covered with a lace mitten, to hide a convulsive movement of her mouth.

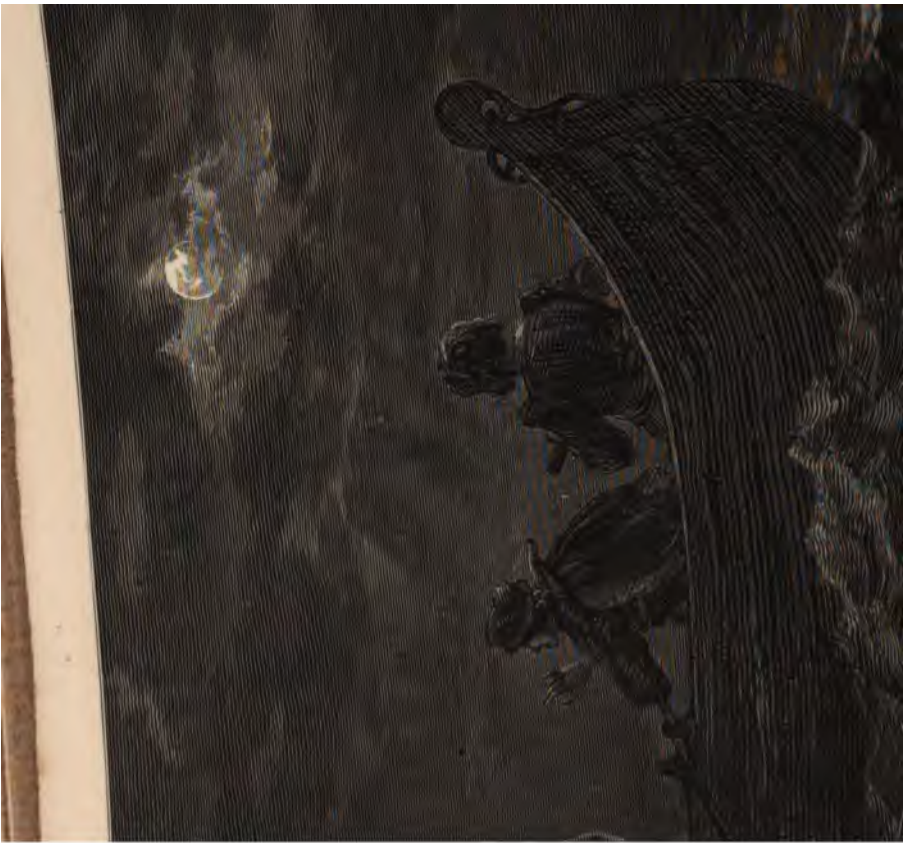
At a certain point in her narrative of Mr. Gilfil's love-story, George Eliot relates how, after Sunday morning service at the village church, 'Lady Assher, Beatrice, and Captain Wybrow entered, all with that brisk and cheerful air which a sermon is often observed to produce when it is quite finished.' The Country Parson, whose *Recreations* have made him a name—or at least the initials of one, in the aggregate form of A.K.H.B.—appeals to his readers to own their fellow-feeling with the sense of relief he used to welcome in his youth, when his worthy pastor and master of those days reached that prayer of St. Chrysostom which signified that the long service was nearly over. The sermon he flatly declares to be in

most cases 'horribly tedious.' And he refers to the sign of Edward Irving calling his volume of discourses orations reason assigned,—that there is something in the very name that makes people grow sleepy, and that suggests yawning, and tediousness to the last degree. Fuller is frank in making us his confidant in the matter of a person displeasing to him,—a way he had, when sitting down to Bible, of turning over the leaf to see if the chapter were short, and finding himself not unwilling that it should be that be pardonable, how venial is such a sense of relief as he heard Madame de Longueville confess, on putting by *La Pucelle*,—a good thing, of course; but still more a good thing. And then she has Boileau to back her in her estimate of work:

'La Pucelle est encore une œuvre bien galante,
Et je ne sais pourquoi je baille en la lisant.'

Be the why and wherefore what it might, the fact of the matter is a fact; and facts are stubborn things.

NICIAS FC



THE NIGHT VOYAGE

From dark clouds down on the deep wild sea
Sad look'd the misty moon ;
While slowly we, in number three,
Row'd into night's mid noon.

Our white oars plash'd with a constant knell
Of weird monotony,
While ever the salt mist rose and fell,
And sprinkled us all three.

She stood in the boat—so pale, so fair—
Stood by the stern alone,
As though she a statue of Dian were,
Carved in cold moveless stone !

The moon's last light wax'd low, and chill
The night wind whistled by,
When out of the darkness there seem'd to fill
The darkness a sudden cry !

Out of the night came that warning cry,
But a sea-mew's voice ; yet white
Were our faces all, as that ghostly sigh
Again pass'd into the night.

Am I mad with fever ? a vision is this ?
Or midnight fantasy ?
Am I mock'd by a dream or dread, which is
Born of some gramarye ?

A fearful fancy, a terrible dream
Of madness and misery !
The slow night yawns, the night birds scream—
' O Heaven, have mercy on me !

O merciful Heaven, have mercy on me !
Have mercy, O Heaven !' In vain !—
With a dead dull sound it sinks in the sea,
Its dirge but wild wind and rain.

With the rising sun we reach'd the shore,
Where the sweet sad blossoms grew ;
But one of us saw that sun no more,
Our number was then but two.

APRIL FOOLS

MAKING April fools has been pithily described to be calling a man a fool because he does not take you for a knave. Why the first of April should be set apart in our calendar as a day of fools is difficult to discover; as difficult indeed as the origin of some of the phrases,—to send a person for a second edition of Cock Robin or a ha'p'orth of crocodile-quills, for flying-fish, or for bottled sunbeams, for the history of Eve's mother, for hen's teeth, stirrup-oil, tulip-powder, or for mare's or pigeon's milk—which last, in the face of the common expression 'sucking-dove,' does not seem so absurd—and to dance Moll Dixon's round;—all which phrases, with many others, are still in repute as jests on this singular anniversary. Still, by considering whether the custom exists in other countries, and the various origins which have been from time to time suggested for it, we may perhaps, out of a harvest of folly, glean some few ears worth storing in the granage of wisdom, or the magazine of amusement.

Somewhere in the *Spectator*, that gentleman tells a story of a neighbour of his who was in the haberdashery line, and 'withal a very shallow conceited fellow,' who used to make a boast that in ten years he had been fortunate enough to make no less than a hundred April fools. Each of these feats of the understanding caused him, as like feats seem to have caused all those before and after him, triumphant laughter. But this haberdasher must have risen very early to pursue his game, or availed himself of devices and stalking-horses which the wit of the present generation is unable to invent. Such time-honoured and facetious lies as 'Sir, you have dropped your handkerchief!' could scarcely have brought down ten birds in a day, even were they as simple as those which perch on the yardarms of ships, and suffering the sailors to take them in their artless tameness, are therefore called 'boobies,' and forthwith strangled. This haberdasher's fancy was indeed unusually extravagant. On one memorable first of April—that by the *Spectator* recorded—the *Spectator's* landlady had a falling-out with this mercer, for sending every one of her children on what she termed a 'sleeveless' errand,—by which she probably meant bare, without reasonable cover or pretence; though a sleeveless young lady in a ball-room is not now stigmatised as bare or clad unreasonably. He had sent the eldest son and heir of the landlady to buy a halfpennyworth of inkle—a kind of narrow tape—at a shoemaker's, while her eldest daughter was dispatched half a mile to see a monster; and, in short, her whole family of innocent children were made fools of. Even the landlady herself appears not to have escaped this deep-revolving and facetious man. Trained up as a child in the ways of wit, coming to mature

age and a respectable line of business, he was evidently loth to depart from them. Indeed the children of his day seem not very much to have differed from those of this in the fashion of their snares and lures; for a respectable writer of the time says, speaking of the first of April, 'It is customary on this day for boys to practise jocular(?) exceptions. When they succeed, they laugh at the person whom they think they have rendered ridiculous, and exclaim, "Ah, you April fool!"' Seventy years ago the favourite deceit was, 'Sir, your coat's unbuckled.' To that succeeded, 'Sir, your shoe's untied!' In 1830, when shoes were no more *à la mode*, the waggery of the day was, 'Sir, there's something out of your pocket.' 'Where?' 'Here!' 'What?' 'Your hand, sir. Ah,' &c. &c. Or again, 'I am, you have something on your face.' 'Indeed, what is it?' 'With the handkerchief ready. 'Your' nose, ma'am! Ah,' &c. &c. The ultimate rejoinder being in all cases accompanied with inextinguishable laughter.

The custom is not indigenal, but subsists in other countries. In ancient Rome, Plutarch tells us, the Quirinalia was called the Feast of Fools (*Festa Stultorum*), which festival, however, occurred in February. It was so named in honour of Quirinus, and derived its second appellation from the fact that the stupid parts of the people, who knew not their own *curia* or tribe, or had, from absence, ignorance, or neglect, missed their own tribe's celebration of the Fornalia—a festival instituted in honour of the goddess of ovens, that their corn might be sufficiently baked—were allowed to hold their *ornacalia* separately on this particular day.

The French have their All Fools'-day also, and call the person exposed on a *poisson d'Avril*, or 'mackerel,' which, like the booby, seems to possess the folly of being an innocent and unsuspecting animal, and easily taken; or *poisson* may be for *poison*, and so the expression mean an April mischief. There is a pretty tale of a French lady, who, suffering apparently from a slight attack of kleptomania, pocketed her friend's watch and chain; and on being charged with the theft before the magistrate, declared the charge was nothing, *à foi*, but *un poisson d'Avril*. As she denied that the watch and chain were taken by her or in her possession, a messenger was sent to her lodgings, who found those articles lying on the chimneypiece; upon which *la dame spirituelle* avowed that the magistrate had made the messenger *un poisson d'Avril*. The unfortunate woman was convicted and imprisoned: whether she regarded this *dénouement* so as an *un poisson d'Avril*, we are unable to say.

We have suggested one origin of this term; twenty others might be given, every one stranger than that preceding it. For instance, one of the most accredited is, that on one occasion Louis XIII. held a strict watch, in the château of Nanci, a prince of Lorraine, who had had the ill-fortune seriously to offend him. The prisoner one

night escaped the notice of his guards, and saved himself on the first of April by swimming across the river Meuse, on which the people of Lorraine said that Louis had held a *poisson* in his custody. It is, however, probable that the custom of giving a man something to do, that we may afterwards generously laugh at him for his pains, has a beginning farther back than the age of Louis XIII. ; and were it not that the corruption of the word *passion* into *poisson* is rather forced, we should follow that derivation. By this the mockery of Christ by the Jews is alluded to, which is supposed to have happened in April. The sending from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, is well known, and appears to have had no other design than to give useless trouble. Another sacred origin of the custom, without reference to the French name, is the mistake of Noah, who sent the dove out of the ark before the waters had abated, on the first day of the month among the Hebrews which answers to our April. To perpetuate the memory of the deliverance of eight favoured souls from the otherwise universal destruction of the human race, it was thought afterwards fit to punish those forgetting it by sending them on some—to use the words of the Spectator's landlady—sleeveless errand, similar to that ineffectual message upon which the bird was sent by the patriarch.

A German writer, in whose country this good old practice and venerable usage is also observable, gives perhaps the most sensible origin of the expression, when he derives it from the deceitful and varying April weather, in which the pleasing fancy of a walk in the open day-shine is too often changed into the dull reality of a cold and drizzling rain. April certainly makes thus fools of us all; and her quick-recurring sun-smiles may well be her woman's laughter at our confiding folly.

In Sweden, too, the rustics show their wit on the first of April, and in Lisbon, though the time is changed to the Sunday and Monday preceding Lent. Here to pour water from an attic down the back of an unsuspecting wayfarer is held to be what Artemus Ward would call a 'goak,' and to throw dust and ashes on the head, or in the eyes, is also a mark of notable facetiousness; but to do both these things to the same sufferer is esteemed the perfection of wit. And yet it is not the difficulty of the feat which merits praise; for the passenger, feeling the water, naturally looks up to see whence it came, thus preparing himself for a second course of dust. It can therefore be but the humane desire of benefiting our species which in such actions deserves panegyric. But perhaps this custom belongs rather to the Carnival, Saturnalia, Festum Kalendarum, or Hy-podiaconorum, which we shall presently consider, as, though abounding in humour, it does not appear to contain also the element of deceit which is characteristic of All Fools'-day.

the north of England, April fools—this expression is used of the
er, though it is certainly a matter admitting dispute whether the
be not a greater fool than the sent—are called April 'gouks.'
k, or gowk, is properly a cuckoo, and is used metaphorically
among parlance for a fool. It has also another meaning, un-
known to married ears. It is the German *geck*—which, by the
is also English; for was not Malvolio made the most notorious
and gull that e'er invention played on?—and our own gawky.
Scotland, on April-day, they have a custom of 'hunting the
' as they call it. The Scotch April fool is to our own, as com-
pared to simple addition. It is the old story of sending people on
errands, for their trouble and your own gratification conse-
quently thereon; but it is there done by means of a letter, which con-
tains this distich, as remarkable for its poetry as for its good feeling:

'On the first day of April
Hunt the gowk another mile.'

So the poor gowk goes on and on, from pillar to post, despairing
and sore, hunted indeed, and by Christian hounds, and winding
round like a hunted hare, till some charitable Samaritan has
found on the weary wayfarer, explaining to him the device of the
fool of April, and the advantage enjoyed by those of subtler brains.

Provence, the first of April is distinguished by a remarkable
custom. Everybody—old men and maidens, young men and chil-
dren—from the castle to the cabin—eats on that day a sort of peas
native to the country, known as *pois chiches*. While the convent
of Chartreux was standing, it was the witticism *par excellence*
of novices thither to ask for these peas, telling them that the
nuns were obliged by a vow to give them to all who asked, always
supposing the petitioner was sufficiently importunate. So many ap-
plications were consequently made for the promised bounty of *pois*
chiches, and such persevering determination shown in the demands,
that the patience even of Carthusian monks was exhausted, and two-
thirds at least of the petitioners received, instead of the leguminous
peas, in his hand, the vessel he had brought to hold it on his head.

Among the Hindoos, making April fools is an immemorial cus-
tom at a celebrated feast holden at that period in India which
coincides with the commencement of our April, and which is called
the feast of Huli. During this period of Huli, when mirth and
frolic are supposed to hold paramount rule over Hindoos of every
rank, one prominent subject of diversion is to send people on errands
which result in only a disappointment, which raises a laugh at the ex-
pense of the person sent, always in proportion to the extent of the
pointment. As in England, so in India, this *jeu d'esprit* is,
with few exceptions, confined to the lowest and least-educated por-
tion of the people, though it has been said that the Surajah Dowlat
took the name, by the way, was corrupted into Sir Roger Dowlass;

like the Bellerophon, which underwent a transmutation into the Billy Ruffian) was very addicted to making Huli fools, though of course, as is well known, he was a Mussulman of the highest rank. Let us hope, however, that in this instance the French proverb concerning the falsity of *les on dits* holds true.

Finally, the Festum Hypodiaconorum, or Kalendarum, above referred to, is to be mentioned on the one hand as having no connection with All Fools'-day, on the other, as being frequently confused with it. The Festum Kalendarum was the opening feast of the Roman new year, celebrated in the kalends of January, and so at a distinct time from the festival—if it is worthy of that name—which we have been considering.

The public rejoicings of the Gentiles on this occasion were adopted and travestied by the Christian Church, only somewhat modified and toned down with regard to certain unseemly dances in the skins of wild beasts and lascivious feminine movements, which our austere creed regarded with disfavour. By degrees certain pious fasts and litanies were appointed in place of those impious and profane festivities; but the old Adam was never quite expelled from them. It was this leaven which caused them to be called Festum Hypodiaconorum; not because only subdeacons took a share in these wicked solemnities, but because the higher dignitaries of the Church were ashamed to acknowledge them, on account of their immoral enormities. We may add to this description of the Festum Kalendarum a conjecture,—that April-day may be celebrated as part of the festivity of New-year's-day. That day, it is well known, used to be kept on the 25th of March. The festivals of our forefathers were moreover usually completed by an octave, which would make the first of April the octave's close,—for that reason employed in fool-making, as the highest and grandest attempt at wit.

The legend which attributes the origin of the making of April fools to the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans, at the feast of Neptune, may be mentioned only to be discarded, as it bears on the face of it the fatal absurdity of confusing a wife and a woman with a fool. Equally improbable, though for a different reason, is the opinion which derives its origin from the festival of the god *Risus*, then confined, according to Apuleius, to the Hypatræi. Whether this festival was the same as that Roman one called *Hilaria Matris Deum*, which happened, according to Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, on the 8th day before the kalends of April, or 25th of March, is a matter for the lucubrations of the learned.

The literature of April fools has been stretched to include other kindred expressions, where conceits of jarring and incongruous or contrary natures have been allied like the cat and the fiddle on the signboard of a country inn. The smith who offers to shoe a customer's horse with ice from the tropic zone, which will never grow

Ill grass grows downwards; the vintner who sells wine brewed Welsh pepper, Spanish flies, and a pound of worsted for the riting of cold constitutions,—are but faint echoes of the wit rendered immortal Aristophanes and the author of Gangantua antagruel.

wift's philosopher, who proposed to extract sunbeams from ivers, and he whose study it was to convert bitter aloes into ved ginger by the addition of water, are divided but by a line those they were intended to ridicule,—the mathematician attempted to square the circle, the so-called visionary who l himself about perpetual light and perpetual motion, and the y chemist who thought with his crucibles, retorts, and alem-ome day to stumble upon the philosopher's stone.

we cannot conclude this paper without referring to an origin

Fools'-day suggested by a learned oriental antiquary. He ets the festival with an event which happened in the Isle of ock, on the seventh of the moon Niada, which, in our European lar, makes the first of April. It seems that there formerly d in Chiecock a very righteous king. A vile enchanter, by Ciongoek, envious of this monarch's virtues and the love borne y his subjects, had, by his evil machinations, rendered him ess. Passa, a good fairy, with great difficulty and after many s, effectually countermined the plans of Ciongoek, and a beau-abe was born. Scarcely, however, had the second sun set his birth, when Ciongoek appeared to the queen-mother, clothed able cloud, and with his terrific voice denouncing imprecations e child, frightened its mother out of life. But Passa being ne, and seeing her wishes thus opposed, became frantic, and , by all the oaths which are customary and esteemed most g among fairies, to make the boy her especial care. She kissed eccordingly, and took him away with her to her own place.

passed by; the boy became a man, and ascended, on his 's death, that monarch's throne. There he reigned happily brief space, under the name of Iscamma the Good.

or a brief space, alas! for the evil fiend Ciongoek meantime ot idle. His swift mind had been divided and hurried from ht to thought, like the reflection of sunlight on moving glass or dances about a room; and at last he evolved from his internal ousness a plan of vengeance worthy of himself. Three times ghed at the conclusion of his infernal meditation, and three all nature sighed. Then summoning his beaming car, drawn r gray dragons, he flew from his infernal residence through spiring all the earth with horror. Roses, it is said, on that on withered, and lilies suddenly drooped and died. Arriving t at Iscamma's palatial domicile, he defied that young monarch ingle combat à l'outrance. Iscamma, after a prefatory prayer

to Passa, resolved to meet him. But, lo! just as the combat was about to commence, Passa, in white garments shining like snow, entered the lists, bearing in her left hand a talisman, on which were engraved in golden letters the fearful words of mystery, 'MAMU ANUDA.' Ciongoek, immediately upon reading this mighty spell, fell without a groan. Ten minutes' interval ensued, after which Ciongoek rose, apparently refreshed, like Antæus from his mother earth, and again defied Iscamma to mortal fight. Once more his eyes met the talisman, and once more he fell senseless. The same anxious interval again elapsed, but at the conclusion of the tenth minute no Ciongoek was visible; only a large rock, which before was not, overshadowed the plain. But when Passa touched this rock with her potent talisman, it dissolved into water like winter snow before the sun of spring; but the water became a flood, and the flood, alas, swept away Iscamma. One seemed to hear the mocking laughter of Ciongoek in the roaring of its waters. Passa, in bitter despair, threw away her talisman, tore her hair, and with wild ululations disappeared, and was never seen on earth again.

The flood rolled about the distance of two miles, and then formed itself into a stagnant pool in the midst of a deep ravine, which henceforward bore the name of 'The Pool of Iscamma.' Why Iscamma thus suffered, it is hard to say; but this lot lay for him upon the lap of the gods. On the day of his disappearance a hallowed fast was instituted, and yearly tributes were ever afterwards paid to his memory. And little by little it came to pass, that when any question arose of doubt or difficulty, the applicant was told to seek Iscamma, but always of course sought in vain. Hence the phrase, which originally denoted a pious pilgrimage, came at last to signify a 'sleeveless errand.' From the Isle of Chiecock this history reached Japan, and thence was carried into our Western world. 'Se non è vero, è ben trovato.'

However and wherever this wretched custom took its rise, it is probable, from its essence, that its origin was early amongst mankind, and that it will nevermore grow obsolete. It is hard to abolish a custom which can urge in its favour stupidity, prescriptive heartlessness, and deceit. When such a man as Sheridan could fill a dark passage in a friend's house with crockeryware, thus severely injuring a guest who entered without suspicion this dangerous strait, is it to be wondered at that lesser wits should send to those whose misfortune it is to be their friends such goods, ordered from trusting tradesmen, as coals and cucumber-frames, two dozen tin coffee-pots, or ten-shillingsworth of common salt?

The public, with an air of virtuous indignation, angrily denounces the unfeeling joke in public, but in private heaps incense on his household altar of Laverna, and whispers to himself, laughing *malis alienis*, 'Wasn't it cleverly done?'

JAMES MEW.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

BY J. E. TAYLOR, F.G.S.

WE are sometimes tempted to put a literal construction on the old-world saying—'There is nothing new under the sun.' The chief difference between the ancients and moderns almost seems to lie in the fact that we have better means of carrying out our ideas than they had. It is really surprising what a multitude of old ideas may be recognised under still more ancient masks. Ideas which have been filtered through millions of minds, which have passed through one language into another, have had the time, place, and person on which they hung all removed, still remain in substance unchanged. What philologists say of 'word-roots'—that they may be recognised in a hundred languages, spite of their metamorphoses—might be applied with equal force to some of the best thoughts and brightest witticisms of modern times. The parallel might be carried farther. These 'word-roots' stretch back to the primitive Aryan language; and, in like manner, many of our modern ideas can be traced to ancient authors. Among these the Greeks come first. But whether they struck them from their own mind, or literally 'spoiled the Egyptians' to obtain them, we cannot tell. Human nature takes a long time to alter; and it is likely enough many of these classic writers were as great plagiarists as ourselves.

Those two modern sciences, comparative philology and comparative mythology, have played sad havoc with the speculations of the last century—those to which all of us are more immediately wedded. We are called upon to put aside the works on the origin of language, and the identity of pagan traditions with scriptural characters and narratives, or must retain them on our shelves for the sake of the good English they still teach us. Amid all the maze of myth, language, and religion which so long has perplexed the philosophic mind, we are tracing the thread which will guide us so as to find our way out. Mankind, with its host of languages and religions, its civilisations and barbarisms, seems nevertheless to have had a common legacy of old-world ideas. From grave to gay, from lively to severe—nearly all kinds of modern ideas find their representatives in the literature of antiquity. The most dazzling of our systems of philosophy would have been baseless without those of Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato. But we little imagine how much we are indebted to the Greeks for the very tales which for so long have been effectual

in setting 'the table in a roar.' That such is the case, however, any student of out-of-the-way Greek authors who has read Hierocles is well aware.

This classic 'Sydney Smith' was the great opponent of the Sophists, and did for them exactly what our own *Punch* would have, had his comic lordship then been in existence. The pedantic pride of this sect raised the bile of the cant-hating wit, who accordingly made them the butts of his jokes. Many of these were so good, that they have been in existence ever since. All the circumstances, the auxiliaries, have been changed; but the substance of the jokes has not evaporated. We have decanted this old wine repeatedly; but it has proved none the worse for the process. Strange enough, many of our modern Joe Millers are merely free translations of Hierocles' jokes, although few readers or utterers of the former are aware of it. No tale is anything without a peg to hang upon. This peg our ancient jester found in the Sophists, or *Scholasticus*; we discover it in Irishmen. It is really astonishing what a number of 'bulls' we habitually refer to the natives of Hibernia, which were fathered more than two thousand years ago on people who were forgotten long before Irishmen were known. In taking a few commonplace ones, it will be impossible not to perceive their identity. Thus, there is the story of the Irishman who, having narrowly escaped drowning, declared he would not go into the water again until he had learned to swim! This dates before the Christian era; as also does the tale of the 'gentleman' in distressed circumstances, who decreased the feed of his horse until it came to a straw a day, when, much to the chagrin of its master, 'Be jabers, just as he got to do widout food at all, the cratur died!' We have heard this story repeated so often, that we fail to laugh at it. Another 'cock-and-bull' tale is that told of an Irishman who had a house to sell, and therefore frequented the market-place with a brick and a chimney-pot as samples of its quality! The ancient Greeks shook their sides at its ludicrousness when *Scholasticus* took the Irishman's place. The coincidence between ancient and modern *bon-mots* may be carried still farther. One of the most laughable of the tales told of these classic pedants—who were always popularly represented as making fools of themselves, in spite of their learning—was that in which a member of their body has an adventure with a barber and a bald-headed man. The barber seems to have been fond of practical joking; for during the night he arose and shaved *Scholasticus'* head to the same condition as that of his sleeping companion! The tale runs on to tell how the philosopher had to get up before the rest to pursue his journey, and, accordingly, was awakened early for the purpose. No sooner was he aroused than, putting his hand to his head and finding it denuded of its hirsute covering, he declared they had awakened the *wrong man*! Nearly a similar story is told nowadays of an

Irishman who, being on the 'tramp,' practically realised the truth that travellers become acquainted with strange bed-fellows. In stopping at a village inn, he found himself obliged to sleep with a negro. During the night some wags blackened his face; and Paddy, having been called early, rose and went on his way, as usual unmindful of solution. After he had got some distance on the road—so runs the common story—he accidentally saw his blackened features in some water by the wayside, when he immediately returned, declaring they had wakened the 'wrong man afther all!' It is impossible not to see the clear connection between these two tales, although upwards of twenty centuries elapsed between their telling. Again, who has not heard the story of the two Hibernians who, having twenty miles to walk before they reached London, and being dead-beat, cheered each other by declaring it was 'only ten miles a-piece'? There are few of us who have not fallen into the trap of uttering something like this as original. The ancient Greeks, however, told the tale of the two Sophists; and the joke has passed, on its way to England, through Italy and France. In each country it has been slightly modified, although the same point of wit has always been preserved. Then come one or two other stories of even commoner repetition, such as that of an inquisitive Paddy, who heard that ravens lived two hundred years, and accordingly bought one to try! Alas, this is only another instance of the social tyranny we are in the habit of inflicting upon the sons of the Emerald Isle; for the same tale was told long before the advent of the Christian religion. The narrative of the Irishman who sat down with shut eyes before a mirror, to see how he looked when asleep, is equally antique.

Let us render social justice to Ireland, if we have hitherto found it difficult to administer political. Notwithstanding the erratic tendency to blunder peculiar to his race, it is hardly fair that modern ridicule should lay all these ancient bulls on Pat's broad and good-tempered back. When we think of the flashes of merriment which these old jokes have made across the social and intellectual darkness of the intervening ages, we cannot but be thankful for them. 'There is a time to laugh,' says the Wise Man, and the world instinctively seizes hold of the opportunity. Jokers and punsters are therefore as necessary to its well-being as individuals of more ambitious talents. Puerile and feeble though many of the witticisms we have mentioned may be, human nature could not afford to let them die. It is too fond of an occasional ray of laughter solemnly to bury that produces it, and therefore has carefully handed it down as a legacy from one generation to another. But there is a dark side to this antiquity of jokes, as well as a bright one. We have not only preserved all the good old wine, and rebottled it in more attractive magnums—we have also received a legacy of unfit beverage along with it. The weak-minded and 'fast' young men, who prime each

other with tales and narratives unfit for their mothers and sisters to hear, are little aware they are retailing merely the dregs of Aristophanes, Boccaccio, Rabelais, or La Fontaine! All the genuine wit and humour which this morality *in extremis* was lugged in to illustrate has been forgotten or lost sight of, so that the narrators have not even the merit of originality in their lasciviousness!

But not only are many of our jokes, good and bad, as 'old as the hills,' but our fables are generally still more so. This is a fact in literature so well known generally as to require little proof in these pages. Æsop's fables will live as long as the world endures. The poets and writers of most European countries have gained another reputation, either by translating or paraphrasing them, to say nothing about their having served as models for similar and original attempts. In England, our own Gay transposed them in smooth native verse for the use of his royal pupils. In France, La Fontaine translated them in his own sparkling champagne manner. Indeed, there are few fables in any civilised country which cannot be more or less traced to the ancient Greeks. This was a method of teaching morality very popular among them. Among those fables which undoubtedly have an outside origin may be mentioned that of Reynard the Fox. This has perhaps a greater antiquity than any in Æsop, although there is reason to suppose that many of his had floated as illustrations in popular folk-lore, before he fixed them as part of Greek classic literature. That just mentioned can be easily followed in European literature to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, when it is lost sight of. But far beyond this period it had an immense Scandinavian antiquity. It has also been recently found among the South African Kaffres, with whom it has been naturalised for untold ages. So great was the popular influence of this fable in France at one time, that it changed the common name of the fox (*vulpes*) into that of *renard*, which it still holds as proof of its former hold on the national mind.

This antique and, geographically speaking, widespread existence of certain fables or allegorical morals naturally leads me to the consideration of those old-world stories which have laid a common basis of tradition and legend in most European countries. There is something more important than the indulgence of mere curiosity in this investigation, interesting though that engagement may be. The scattered incongruous myths and legends which most civilised nations have in common give us a glimpse of the former unity which bound races together before their pre-historic migrations. The 'whence and whither' of nations speaking a hundred different languages are frequently better indicated by their half-forgotten and much changed traditions than from their physiological resemblances. I have no hesitation in affirming that the roots of many popular beliefs and legends extend backwards to the palæolithic age, when savage

was companion to the woolly-haired mammoth and rhinoceros. Regularly enough, what comparative philology, in the hands of Max Müller and others, has so plainly indicated—viz. the origin of all European and Asiatic peoples from a common Aryan source—is more amply borne out by the still younger science of comparative mythology. The latter takes these obscure myths, compares and collates them, and out of seeming chaos brings forth unity of origin. The most honest differences in these family traditions are just those we might expect from our knowledge of the geographical distribution of animals and plants. These *incidental*ia naturally change in the relation with the fauna and flora of the places where they are mentioned—modified much after the fashion that English colonists gave new names of 'dog,' 'bear,' &c. to the marsupial animals of Australia most resembling these well-known creatures.

How such a metamorphosis could be effected we have an illustration in the early history of Christianity. Milton, in his poem on 'Nativity,' represents the pagan deities as fleeing before the introduction of Christian personages. But, as Lecky has shown in *History of European Morals*, the opposite was probably the reality of the early teachers of the new religion. Paganism, with its gods and goddesses of the mountains, woods, and streams, had taken a deep hold of the popular imagination to be loosened by any mere doctrinal teaching. And so these fabulous beings were represented as evil spirits, now to be dreaded and shunned. The popular idea of the Satanic appearance, with its horns, hoofs, and tail, still exists, and bears undoubted traces of its origin from Pan. The fables which grew around the pagan deities were Christianised, or excelled by the supposed miracles of saintly anchorites. Many of the old pagan myths in this way became dressed in Christian garb, and as we swell our hagiology. From our old church and cathedral windows they look down upon us, and their symbols figure on ecclesiastical screens. No wonder, therefore, they should have taken such a deep root in the mediæval mind, seeing they were perpetually before us and always associated with its most solemn duties and engagements.

The ancient Romans undoubtedly borrowed from the Greeks to enrich their mythology, and the latter from the still more ancient Egyptians. Whence this 'pyramid-building people' obtained them, we can only guess from the identity of some of their myths with those of the Hindoos. In many cases, from the latter to the Roman Catholicism of the sixteenth century, we have an unbroken, although slightly modified, sequence of legend. The close resemblance, amounting frequently to identity, of Scandinavian and Keltic myths to those of ancient Hindostan, is a wonderful instance of the assistance given by comparative mythology to the science of language and ethnology. It requires little logical perception to see there must have been some

connection between peoples so far removed in time and space as the ancient Druids of Britain and the modern Javanese, as the following will show: The inhabitants of Java have a superstitious reverence for the *Ficus religiosa*—which tree receives its name on that account—because there grows upon it a species of mistletoe! With our own pagan ancestors it was the oak which received semi-worship on that account.

A French geologist has lately thrown out the idea that the huge fossil bones found so abundantly in the miocene beds of Pikermi, near Athens, may have influenced popular belief in the tradition of the Titans warring against Zeus, and others of a similar kind. And it has frequently struck the writer that the tradition of a deluge, certainly more or less believed in by every distinct nation or race, may have resulted in the dim antiquity of man, from the forced migration of the palæolithic men, when the period known as the glacial drove all mammalian life from the northern continents, and forced it to retreat to southern latitudes. The whole of Europe was then gradually submerged beneath a wintry sea, and it is an incontestible fact that land animals and plants had the only option of migration. If man were then in existence (and there is ample reason to believe he was), he would have been forced by circumstances to a similar result, and thus the hazy tradition of a mighty deluge, modified as the narrative is by every nation, would be common to all subsequent races.

The origin of myths, and their relative antiquity and meaning, has been popularly treated by the Rev. Baring-Gould in his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*. With great learning and research, that author has shown, in a style at once clear and attractive, the connection of many modern legends with those of antiquity. Who for instance, would ever dream of finding the original of St. George and the Dragon in the Greek myth of Apollo and Python, or Perseus and the sea monster? This the Greeks doubtless borrowed from the Phenecians, and the latter, possibly, from India, in whose most ancient literature we find it enshrined. The myth of the Wandering Jew—now so well known to us all from Doré's magnificent illustrations of this weird subject—was in the middle ages applied to hypothetical Jew who refused to allow the Saviour to halt at his threshold as He was bearing the cross. But the ground-work of this legend is considerably older than the Christian era. The story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus has both an oriental and Scandinavian source. The idea of a miraculous sleep is not limited to these mythical individuals, but extends to Charlemagne, Thomas of Ercildoune (see old ballad), and Frederick Barbarossa. We find it shadowed forth in the traditions of North American Indians, and it was common property, ten centuries ago, to every country in Europe. Even the mysterious symbol of the cross—properly deemed so peculiarly

teristic of the Christian era—has an antiquity extending for
 ies beyond the date when it was supposed to have originated.
 and it connected with Hindoo mythological figures, and even
 ted among Assyrian hieroglyphics. It was an ornament or
 l among the Etruscans, and has been met with even among
 Mexican antiquities of Central America. Both among the
 is and Greeks it was well known, and the writer has seen
 British pottery considerably older than the Christian era. Sin-
 enough, there were varieties of the cross-symbol in ancient
 just as we have them at present. The sacred sign throws
 protecting shadow backwards as well as forwards, as though it
 shelter and protect all the races of mankind. The legend of
 per of Hamelin is now well known to all English readers from
 Browning's poem. But its basis is founded in very ancient
 , each of them having for its theme the power of music over
 imate creation. We have the body of the story in the legend
 heus and his descent into hell.

at the most curious deduction from the spirit of these ancient
 is that made by the Rev. Baring-Gould, who detects the old
 e theory of the soul's departure being accompanied by un-
 music, in the hymns of many of the English dissenting sects.
 ing to that of the late Dr. Faber, beginning,

* Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling
 O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore,*

presses his decided opinion, that the idea is undoubtedly
 d on this ancient superstition. He continues this explana-
 his article on the 'Fortunate Islands;' wherein, referring to
 ltic idea of the souls of the departed passing across an un-
 sea—an idea we have, by the way, in the classic fable of
 n's boat—he quotes this as an illustration of the hold which
 t mythological doctrines relative to death still have upon the
 , and shows how it is engrafted on popular religion in such
 as—

' Shall we meet beyond the river,
 Where the surges cease to roll?'

cannot forbear quoting the passage which treats on this
 ar and unlooked-for relationship between ancient and modern
 us idea. 'A careful study of these sources will, I am satis-
 ead to the discovery, that under the name of Methodism we
 the old Druidic religion still alive, energetic, and possibly
 vigorous than it was when it exercised a spiritual supremacy
 he whole of Britain. With the loss of the British tongue,
 of the old terminology has died out, and a series of adapta-
 to Christianity has taken place without radically affecting the
 a.'

Farther, Mr. Gould tells us that it is a fair subject for inquiry whether the popular iconography of the angel-hosts is not indebted to ancient tradition for its most striking features. Another heathen myth is 'embodied in the tenet that the souls of the departed become angels. In Judaic and Christian doctrines, the angelic creation is distinct from that of human beings. According to Druidic dogma, the souls of the dead were guardians to the living; a belief shared with the ancient Indians. Thus the hymn, "I want to be an angel, &c.," so common in dissenting schools, is founded on the venerable Aryan myth, and therefore of exceeding interest, but Christian it is not.' The very basis of so-called 'spiritualism,' therefore, lies not in a Christian, but in the old Druidic dogmas. Truly there is 'nothing new under the sun.'

The oft-repeated, and still much believed in, stories of mermen and mermaids are as old as the days of the Philistines, whose god Dagon, represented as falling to pieces before the ark of the Lord, was symbolically represented as half-fish, half-man. The same idea is expressed on Assyrian and Hindoo sculpture. Many old tales, which have been reduced to the level of nursery rhymes, have an antiquity even greater than this notion. In the youth of the world, when the poetic spirit was strong upon it (if Lord Macaulay's theory be true), the only way in which natural phenomena could be popularly expressed and understood would be in trope and allegory. We have a remnant of this personification even now, in our masculine and feminine gender for the sun and moon. Most of the old myths resolve themselves into physical explanations of natural phenomena. Afterwards they became crystallised apart from the subjects to which they primarily referred, or were sublimed into the regions of tradition. And lastly, when inquiry and experience had put many relations on a better-known footing, we should have these very legends and stories exiled to a separate condition of their own, still to be drawn upon, however, as one means of awing the vulgar crowd.





C. J. Staniland, del.

Edmund Evans

EASTER

THE EASTER LIFTING

In aged Peasant Woman's Reminiscence

O the merry May-times,
I remember well ;
And the Easter play-times,
Whensoever they fell !

Woods were all a-greening,
Flowers all ablaze ;
Singing-birds sat preening—
O the merry days !

In the daisy meadows
It was sweet to be ;
Lambs pursued the shadows—
Lighter hearts had we.

Hedgerow flowers stringing,
Till our crowns were done ;
All together singing—
And the lark made one.

Lads their chosen lasses
Screening as we stray'd,
Wading meadow grasses,
Resting in the shade ;

Threading flying dances,
Tired with merry games ;
Eyes all joyous glances,
Cheeks like glowing flames.

Pleasures ever shifting
In their endless maze—
Then, good heart, the Lifting
In the Easter days !

Ev'ry lad insnaring,
Each a captive made ;
None escaped the chairing,
All the forfeit paid.

O the Lifting-day time !
O the sport to tell
In the Easter play-time,
Whensoever it fell !

WILLIAM SAWYER.

ALABAMA GOSSIP

'WHAT'S sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander,' although usually accepted by us as a truism, appears, as regards its application, to be an old proverb whose meaning is but little understood on the other side of the Atlantic. Uncle Sam is such an almighty, go-ahead sort of a fellow altogether, and his shrewd, estimable offspring so essentially 'peculiar' a 'people,' that neither he nor they can be expected to consider seemingly-identical things in the same light when, in one instance, they may personally commend Hail Columbia, and, in the other case, only have reference to the well-being of outside and foreign nations. No, the astute Sam has a profound knowledge of *meum* and *tuum*; and is far too prudent and cautious a personage to admit the truth of any such proposition as that which the trite old adage quoted above would tend to convey. He has one rule for guiding his own conduct, and another which he judges the peccadilloes of his neighbour. The measure he metes out to others is decidedly not 'good enough,' to adopt the slang phrase of the day, when any question affecting the interests of the 'Great Republic,' with a capital G and R, is weighed in the balance; and his wisdom is so ripe, his dexterity so great, that Uncle Sam is always confident of being able at any time to remove the 'mote' from his brother's eye, while the 'beam' yet obstructs his own vision. He is, in fact, a 'right smart coon,' I guess, who shall team and a cross dog under the wagon' to boot; and a person who must get up uncommonly early in the morning to get a rise out of him.

The game of 'heads I win, tails you lose,' offers a fair example of the very peculiar species of diplomatic policy which our Transatlantic cousins are prone to affect. It certainly may be a pleasant pastime for one of two players; but it is obviously not nearly so satisfactory a sport for the necessarily non-gaining side. To the Americans, however, it affords such splendid openings for the national spirit of 'enterprise,' is so perfectly *en règle*, open, and above-board, and is considered such a fair method of procedure, that its adoption in general for all international difficulties can hardly be wondered at—especially as it reduces the possibility of risk to a minimum, and possesses such practical advantages as are evinced by the present aspect of the Alabama-claims dispute—a dispute which has protracted as indefinitely, involved as hopelessly, and is now as far from a peaceful solution as was the never-to-be-under-Schleswig-Holstein question prior to the Austro-Prussian inv

of Denmark in 1863. Really, on first reading over the 'case' of the United States against this country, as it is presented to the Geneva board of arbitrators appointed under last year's treaty, one ought to feel a sort of patriotic sinking in one's boots, be half inclined to heap dust on one's head, and solicitous of a repentance in the metaphorical sackcloth and ashes. When the honest and virtuous indignation is marked with which the Washington cabinet contrive to pile on the agony of our misdeeds, when the earnest pathos is perceived that Mr. Secretary Fish calls to his aid in dwelling on England's 'unfriendliness' to the 'Union,' in its hour of mortal struggle for supremacy over the ill-fated South, Fancy can almost descry the oily tears trickling down his cheeks the while, as happened to the once fabled leviathan of the Nile! One would be almost if not altogether persuaded to cry *peccavi*, and ask the estimable gentlemen on the other side of the big pond to deal with us gently, and not visit us according to our offences, did not memory suddenly call to mind sundry little delicate matters that might be argued *per contra*, and of which the American authorities appear to be strangely, if wholesomely, oblivious. I can recollect quite well one morning, when I was in New York some six years ago, getting up late and seeing, almost half across my breakfast-room, the capital letters of staring type in which the *Herald*, then lying on my table, trumpeted forth a 'Battle of Bayridge,' and a 'Fenian Invasion of Canada.' Perhaps, like that of the claimant in a recent *cause célèbre*, Mr. Fish's recollection is 'a complete blank' concerning the circumstances attending any such report. Did he ever learn that a ragged band of pillaging desperadoes, calling themselves 'The Army of the Irish Republic,' and mustered, drilled, equipped, and organised without concealment on American territory, invaded a neighbouring country, a colony of Great Britain, with whom the mighty owner of 'the star-spangled banner' was supposed to be at the time at peace? I wonder if by any chance this Fish, more eloquent than the talking seal, ever knew anything about the anticipated proceedings of 'General' Sweeny with his conspirator-like face, coal-black hair, and band of fifty thousand 'boys in blue' before they 'went to the wars,' like Falstaff and his motley crew, robbed the hen-roosts of the poor Kaucks, and frightened them all along the border? Would this honest secretary 'be surprised to hear,' when he harps with such a 'damnable iteration' on the neglect of this country in allowing an unarmed steamer to escape from her shores, in despite of every attempt made to arrest her departure, that, although the movement was loudly proclaimed in the New York press weeks before it actually happened, no efforts whatever were made, or caused to be made, by the government at Washington to prevent the raiding rascals under Sweeny from crossing the frontier, notwithstanding that there was full cognisance of the 'Irish patriots' purpose long before it

was actually carried out, and although a brigade of the regular Union army was close to the scene of hostilities at Buffalo? Far from interfering, it was not indeed until the Fenian 'invasion' had culminated in a 'fizzle,' as the *Herald* described it, and that the raiders had come to, seen, and *not* conquered Canada, being driven back pell-mell to St. Albans, a little town lying not far from the line of demarcation between the Dominion and the States, in as great a stampede comparatively as that of Bull's Run, that the Washington executive thought fit to take any steps in the matter. Even then the Fenian 'general' was only put under a nominal arrest, to be afterwards released on straw bail, while the tag-rag and bob-tail of his followers were simply disarmed and allowed to return in peace to the bosom of their families, to be subsequently regarded as heroes who had dealt a brilliant blow against the haughty Sassenach, on behalf of the gem of the say, their said arms, of which they were for a while deprived, being in a few months restored to them again, so that they might not be put to any additional expense in procuring new weapons when meditating a fresh foray on our unsuspecting colonists. There is not a nation in Europe that would have put up with similar treatment from a friendly power; and yet we appear to have borne it without tendering hardly a remonstrance, so great is the wisdom in our high places!

Such was the course pursued towards us by the American government in 1866; and so they acted likewise three years later, when Prince Arthur and the gallant Sixtieth Rifles had the pleasure of surprising another army of raiders, and repulsing a second 'invasion' of Canada. Only the other day, too, there was yet another attempt made against Manitoba, the most western province of the Dominion; and still the United States authorities did not display any greater alacrity to act in a friendly manner towards us than they had done before. Indeed, up to the close of my stay in New York, within a short time back, there used to be in Union Square—the most central position in the city—a large mansion openly kept up, and designated as the 'Head-quarters of the Fenian Brigade;' and the 'Army of the Irish Republic,' great in green and gold, and carrying colours gaudy with the traditional harp of Erin emblazoned thereon, was accustomed to march about the streets, and have picnics and other anniversary festivals at Jones' Wood, a large park-like enclosure 'up town,' without any let or hindrance being placed in their way by the American government. It is true that, as far as I could see, the recruited heroes who composed this verdant force were not of any imposing muscular build, and that their strength languished, growing 'small by degrees and beautifully less,' as the servant girls' dollar subscriptions declined; and, I suppose, the obliquity of vision that the United States authorities displayed towards their organisation was in proof of 'friendliness' towards this

country! If the Canadians in any light-hearted moments had equipped similar parties of raiders to disport themselves on Uncle Sam's territory, I have a fancy that we should have heard a little more of it on this side of the Atlantic; but Mr. Fish has never seemed to have taken into consideration the expenses incurred by our colonists in preparing against these repeated assaults emanating from a neighbouring and 'friendly' power. What is even more surprising, those able negotiators on the part of England, our 'commissioners,' appear to have spontaneously surrendered all claims of Canada for retaliatory damages, which would have been a valuable set-off against those demanded of us on account of the Alabama's depredations, without getting any *quid pro quo* in exchange. They have gone farther still; for they have given up cheerfully, without even asking the consent of the natives of the Dominion, all those fishing rights and other favours along the Canadian coasts, that Uncle Samuel demurely demanded. O, those canny commissioners! I cannot help quoting what a candid and critical American friend said to me last year when Mr. Gladstone's partisans were applauding his dexterous handiwork as shown in this great Washington Treaty—"I guess," said my friend, "those Joint High coons of yours are smethin' like the "wise men of Gotham, who went to sea in a bowl;" our cabinet log-rollers have jest sailed round 'em right smart, that's a fact.' And so they have! If we had only stuck to our rights, we should have an answer to every claim, a discharge of every obligation which fanatic peace-mongers have thrust upon us. And when one hears the childish plea of England's 'want of sympathy' for the Union continually brought forward by American public men, who ought to and *do* know better, bearing in mind, as they must, those other points which have been so delicately slid over by New England politicians, one is irresistibly reminded of the apt though hackneyed *sic vos non vobis*! It is rather hard lines that all the friendliness should be loudly cackled for on one side, and that what is considered a sufficiently piquant sauce for the foolish old goose Britannia should not be equally applicable to the artfully invasive gander on the other side of the Atlantic.

Senator Sumner again, to look at a different phase of the American 'case,' has brought forward another most peculiar doctrine in the matter of England's responsibility. Well do I know the wily senator, and many a time have I had the felicity of listening to and reporting his oily diatribes tinged with gall against that Albion which is as apparently perfidious to him as it was formerly to the French of old. This gentleman has been constantly for the past five years, but for the last two more especially, stumping about the States east and north on the 'platform,' that not only are we liable for the actual direct losses occasioned to Northern shipowners and merchants by the depredations of the Alabama and

other Southern cruisers—some of which, indeed, never even entered a British port—but that we are also liable for all the expenses incurred by the North in carrying on the war after the battle of Gettysburg. He argues that the hearts of the Confederates were so gladdened by the fact of Captain Semmes having burnt the whalers in the Pacific Ocean, that they gained fresh courage to prosecute the struggle with renewed vigour, or, as M. O'Connell described it when declaring war against Germany, *avec un courage léger*. Mr. Sumner has dinned this extraordinary doctrine so firmly and so pertinaciously into Uncle Sam's ears, that he has at last got President Grant and his cabinet to believe in him, although for the honour of America be it said, some of the ablest representative men in the country ridicule his preposterous pretensions. Strange, I suppose my ears must have deceived me, but during the great election contest in '68, when Grant and Colfax were running for President and Vice-President respectively, if I do not greatly err I heard at least a hundred orators and oratoresses, all shining lights in the great Republican party, 'out west' and 'down south' from Miss Anna Dickenson up to General Sickles, publicly declare that the protraction of the war arose solely from the fact that the Northern armies never had a general fit to command them; that the great, the reticent, the doughty, the 'fight-it-out-on-this-line-takes-all-the-summer' Grant came to the fore! Immediately after the 'Saviour of the Union' brought his light out from behind the bushel by which it had been previously hidden, all was victory, success, and the 'hydra head of rebellion' was stamped out for ever at General Lee's surrender before the memorable Appomattox court-house; but what on earth we had to do with the war would certainly puzzle even the far-famed Philadelphia law firm to determine. Mr. Senator Sumner—may his shadow never befall him—appears to think that he is better acquainted with the feelings of the nations than every writer on the subject from Vattel down to the present day. We Cisatlantic folks, he thinks, have too many hazy old notions, that are incompatible with the experience of the European citizens of the great continent across the water. We may say we never heard of such an argument as Mr. Sumner's before, but the persuasive senator retorts with the same philosophy as that which John Peter Robinson, Esquire, used to convince the Reverend Mr. Wilbur when a similar difference of opinion arose in their day, as is stated on the authority of the *Biglow Papers*:

'Parson Wilbur sez he never heard in his life
That the apostles rigg'd out in their swaller-tail'd coats,
An' march'd round in front of a drum and a fife,
To get some on 'em office, and some on 'em votes;
But John P.
Robinson, he
Sez they didn't know ever nothin' down in Judee'

Due credit being given to the Senator's 'reasoning,' the framers of the American case should recollect that if the plea were allowed for a moment to be entertained before the international arbitrators, the Washington cabinet might be held responsible by the German empire for the extra prolongation of the late war after the fall of Metz. Indeed, the States stand on a far worse footing in this respect than we do touching the Alabama. That vessel is acknowledged to have been built in a private yard as a private speculation; but it has been just divulged in the American Senate, that for upwards of five months the United States government factories were allowed to work day and night, to supply the more than fourteen million dollars' worth of arms and munitions of war, that came from the western continent to supply Gambetta's extemporised forces. When people of our Transatlantic cousins' temperament appeal to 'law and justice,' they should come into court with clean hands.

Respecting another point in the indictment against us—it can hardly be urged seriously—that England is bound to pay the costs of all equipments of the cruisers that the Northern States had to fit out for the pursuit of the Alabama, we might just as reasonably present a bill to France or Prussia, when the *vexata questio* is decided as to which country was guilty of bringing about the late war, for the extra two millions estimate which Parliament had to vote last August twelvemonth to keep our forces in a state of readiness for whatever eventuality might arise. This barefaced demand is, as I have heard an eminent American jurist publicly say, not worth a 'row of pins,' to use his own wording, or based on the most slender *soupeçon* of international law. It will not hold water for a moment: none but Messrs. Fish and Sumner, who form such a well-matched hunting couple, could have dreamt of adverting to it in any *bonâ-fide* spirit. Of all these 'indirect claims,' however, the most extraordinary one is that wherein the English nation is held responsible for the falling-off that has taken place in the American mercantile marine since the year 1862. Even ex-general and lawyer Butler, of New Orleans notoriety, cannot support this assumption; and when General Butler cannot lend his aid to any accusation against England, it must rest on a very sorry foundation indeed. I can fancy I now hear his mellifluous accents and cracked-tea-kettle-tuned voice, as I once heard them at one of his most celebrated orations to an infuriated mob in the City Hall Park, New York. 'Thieves of the lobby, bullies of the back streets, and rogues of the Five Points!' he called them—endearing epithets by which one might address a crowd of the inhabitants of our Seven Dials in London—'I have hung your betters, and I'll yet hang you!' he pleaded, unmindful of dead cats and rotten eggs that assailed his bald head in profusion. When I think of that time, and remember the many stump speeches the chivalrous general has

since made against England, I am almost amazed that his should be the only justification of us, in opposition to the President and his cabinet. But, although general, lawyer, what-not Butler may have his own ends probably in view in taking this course—as he is wily withal, and report has it that he is seeking the presidential nomination at the next election, even as he unsuccessfully aimed at it four years ago,—there are still many even in the States, more worthy than he, who are as really surprised at Mr. Fish's sharp practice as the able conqueror of the Crescent city, and gallant purloiner of its lady inhabitants, and purloiner of its spoons affects to be. Why, if I have heard it once stated and proved from unimpeachable statistics, at the quarterly meetings of the American chambers of commerce, held at New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, that the decline of the Transatlantic shipping trade has been entirely owing to the excessive *ad-valorem* duties, miscalled 'protective tariffs,' imposed by Congress on all materials used in the construction of vessels, I have heard it so stated and proved in public, without the slightest dissent, at least a round dozen times. Never once has the Alabama been alluded to, within my recollection, even as a remote cause of the falling-off of the United States mercantile marine, at any of these chambers-of-commerce meetings; and those boards it is well known are composed of the men who ought to know most about the matter, the merchant princes and chief brokers of the leading towns. Only a few weeks back valuable testimony was also given to the same end by one of the American commissioners of revenue, in a contribution to the *Cobden-Club Essays*. Surely the writer, from the very fact of his official position, should be more intimately acquainted with the matter than a hungry 'politician.' Depend upon it, Mr. Commissioner Wells would not have omitted the point in his argument if the depredations of the Alabama could have been lugged into it. No wonder American shipping has declined when every material used in ship-building is so exorbitantly taxed, that fleets of vessels are rotting along the banks of the Hudson and Delaware rivers, because their repairs; even to the most trifling extent, would cost more than they are worth. It can hardly be believed, but should a vessel spring a leak on the seas, and borrow a plank from a passing barque to repair it, she has to pay nearly double the value of the plank as duty when she next enters an American harbour, in case she be owned by a citizen of the great republic;—such is the nature of 'protection.'

Besides, it must be recollected that party politics in the State are 'muchly' different from what they are with us. In England, as yet, John Hodge, ploughman, cares very little whether Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli be to the fore, so long as he gets his beans and bacon regularly, and has constant employment; and, being wholly ignorant of the vast difference between the catchwords 'Whig' and

'Tory,' 'Conservative' and 'Liberal,' is not much influenced by what Jupiter Tonans may have to say on cabinet changes and public events. In America, on the contrary, Nathaniel Bird O'Freedom Service—likewise belonging to the agricultural class—takes an immense interest in political gymnastics, and has not only a voice but a keen insight in the domestic and foreign policy of his country, which our peasantry do not and will not possess until Mr. Forster's able educational measure has had years of practical manipulation. No reference is here made to artisans and those skilled classes of mechanics dwelling in large towns, for they are on a par on both sides of the Atlantic; but take an average English labourer and an American husbandman, and you will find them as different as chalk from cheese: the one has hardly a soul above the turnips among which he delves—and perhaps he is saved a good deal of mental worry by his ignorance—while the other understands party dodges and 'constitutional amendments,' the 'Munroe doctrine' and the Alabama claims, as well, perhaps, as he is acquainted with the merits of 'Bourbon' whisky, the properties of a 'six-shooter,' the blandishments of tobacco-chewing, or the persuasive effects of a bowie knife. Party feeling being of such an inflammable nature throughout the States, it is readily taken advantage of by the opposing Democratic and Republican factions, and so worked as to suit their place-seeking purposes. The first treaty made with America on the Alabama matters was rejected on account of points entirely disconnected with its merits. It was ostensibly vetoed by the United States Senate because it did not take any cognisance of these very indirect claims which are now submitted again in the new 'case;' but the real reason was, that it was negotiated by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, who, unfortunately for him, was not appointed to his post of minister to London by Grant. Had the treaty been ratified at Washington, then would the previous President, 'able Andy,' have gained the credit of the transaction, and the Republicans have received a check; so of course it was vetoed, considering that the conqueror of the Potomac and his ruthless party were in power when it came to be signed, poor Andy having gone back to his tailoring in Tennessee.

The new treaty is agitated at just as unfortunate a time. Party politics are so rife, and so many conflicting elements are at work to secure the loaves and fishes at the approaching presidential contest this year, that the question is more used as a fiery cross to rouse the energies of the drooping Republicans, and keep the Democrats on the *qui-vive*, than considered on fair and equable principles. The Alabama treaty is now simply a party cry from one end of the Union to the other; consequently all the 'tall talk' that comes over the cable is simple 'bunkum,' and this our *soi-disant* cousins know as well as we do who may be admitted behind the scenes: the rapid

outpourings of New England politicians and the vitriolic virulence the New York journals may just be taken for what they are worth which must be with an extra proportional allowance of the proverbial *granum salis*.

There is not much chance or hope of President Grant withdrawing any part of the obnoxious 'case,' because, should he do so, would lose the republican nomination for the Presidency in November, and have to bid a long adieu to the White House at Washington and all his greatness—a sacrifice of which no one who personally acquainted with the veteran warrior would for a moment believe him capable. That being the 'platform,' there can be little question as to the temper of the principal American newspapers and the tone of their articles. The *Tribune* will of course 'build up' the case of the President's cabinet, and Horace Greeley its editor has already signified his intention of supporting Grant in his canvass for the renewal of his appointment as chief magistrate; and to abandon the case would be death to his hopes, turning, as it would, all the votes of the 'Boys in Blue' against him. The *World* was as the organ of the democratic Irish and Fenian element of the population, urge on the prosecution of the American case, in the hope of leading to a war with England. The *New York Times* is the only paper from which any sensible argument, unbiassed by party feeling may be expected: it will give the popular view of the question, and try to steer dexterously between the opposing factions which are united for a while against the common enemy. As for the *Herald* out of the sheer *diablerie* of its policy and mephistophelian character of its chief, it will probably one day bawl for an instant declaration of war against England if the treaty be rejected, and the next cast slime on the President for presenting the indirect claims, and losing a splendid settlement of the question. This journal can be depended on for even twenty-four hours. It has already been babbling about Uncle Sam collecting the debts of the Alabama 'the point of the bayonet,' forgetting, apparently, the three thousand odd miles of sea that lie between the two countries, and the length that would consequently be required for the persuasive sword-weapon. In such a case it is to be feared that Jordan would be found a very 'hard road to trabble,' as the Christy Minstrels sing.

Should the negotiation fall to the ground, as there is every prospect of its now doing, the Americans will only have to thank unscrupulous over-reaching of their own 'politicians' for its failure. In grasping at the shadow of their imaginary claims, these have slipped a tangible opportunity of touching the substance of the almighty dollar, which may peradventure never occur to them again; for John Bull's monetary fears have been aroused of paying so dearly for honesty and good nature—the whole thing being an exceptional piece of international legislation—that he buttons up his poet

like the character in the *Needy Knife-grinder*, exclaiming the while,

'What! I give thee sixpence?
I'll see thee damn'd!'

It may be true enough that as regards the legal wording of the treaty the American government has the 'pull' of ours, through the almost inexcusable neglect of the English Commissioners and the ministry to expressly bar the presentation of all indirect claims, which might have been done in one short sentence; but then nations, like individuals, do not treat one another as so many Shylocks, and the spirit of the law as well as its letter is supposed to operate in all international dealings between them. Uncle Sam will lose far more than we shall when this famous, much-talked-of-as-a-matter-for-universal-gratification Washington treaty ends in the smoke that all things portend; for the answer to Lord Granville's 'friendly remonstrance' may very well be construed beforehand into a polite refusal of President Grant to alter his case, and it is better for us to stop the whole matter at once than enter into it on a false footing.

In any future negotiation on the same basis, it is to be hoped that the rights of the Canadians for real damages inflicted at America's hands will be thought as worthy of consideration as the sympathetic grievances of that country for England's want of friendliness. 'Fair play,' as the Irishman said, 'is a jewel;' and what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander any day all the world over.

JOHN C. HUTCHESON.

APRIL

O FICKLE month of opening flowers,
Of laughing floods and singing leaves,
Of star-strewn grass and grazing beeves,
O month of sunshine and of showers !

Thy swallow flies from over the mere ;
Men say, who mark him flitting past,
' Sad winter is over and gone at last ;
See, summer's harbinger is here !'

Thy moist winds dance amidst the trees,
And oak and beech and silver larch
Forget their nakedness of March ;
About whose boles the shy heartsease

To love devotes its triple shine,
Dash'd with soft sable and gold and blue ;
Thine are germanders fill'd with dew,
And sweet faint cuckoo-blooms are thine.

Thy rosy fingers woods adorn,
Each hand the wide-eyed windflower brings,
And sows on flags wet filmy wings
Of dragon-flies as yet unborn.

What wealth thine ample lap infolds
Of sorrel, with rich purple lined !
Thy footsteps leave cowcups behind,
And flaunting fires of marigolds.

By night, lone Philomela's chime
Salutes thee, thick with passion'd care ;
By day, a thousand sons of air
Sing songs, which love no Lenten time.

Yet though thou rainbows weavest of tears,
Thy promise is too oft a lie ;
Too oft frost-touch'd thy children die,
Thou art less full of hopes than fears.

Thy blushing blooms which fall so fast
Are like our lives, which dream of light
Awhile, then sudden drops long night,
And, lo ! our little lives are past.

HOW I GOT PEPPER

BY ASSISTANT COMMISSARY-GENERAL MUMPS (H.P.)

WHAT a wretched business is winding-up, except to those who make fortunes as liquidators! The winding-up I am thinking of now is the close of the Crimean expedition, when the Government of England and the Emperor of the French, having, after incredible loss of life and treasure, succeeded in massing two magnificent armies on the shores of the Euxine, straightway marched them back again.

The aspect of an abandoned camp is very dreary. The desolate shabby huts; the holes where tents have stood; the *débris* and filth of large masses of men, reeking up unveiled under a hot blazing sun; the deserted starving dogs, prowling about the abandoned dwellings of their masters; the troops of miserable rats, which, wild with hunger, rush out into daylight at the passing hoof-fall, sitting on their haunches, shrieking and cursing at the passer-by—such the sights and sounds I met as I rode pensively homeward to my solitary camp one sultry evening in June 1856.

A few gray-coated Russians were dawdling in a melancholy way among the deserted huts, picking up the waifs abandoned by their late enemies. Excepting these, and the rats and dogs, there was nothing else of life on that plateau, which but a short week ago had been bright with uniforms and gay with martial music.

Nothing else, did I say? Shall I ever forget the fleas—how, entering one day a deserted hut, a heap of dust some two feet high, lying in the corner, proved to be an immense flea-mass? Daily as I returned from my ride, I found myself covered with fleas. The air was pregnant of them. Poor spiritless aimless insects, without pluck to hop, much less to bite. But crawl! Lord, how they did crawl! Tickle! Lord, how they did tickle!

Well, I was riding home along the Woronzow-road, looking forward to my solitary dinner in my solitary hut: the sodden sheep's-flesh—call it not mutton; the tough suet-pudding, which exhausted the resources of my camp to supply; looking forward to the forlorn evening I should spend, staving off the inevitable turning-in by much cigar-smoke and weak brandy pawnee; staving off inevitable horror, the horror of my fever-haunted couch—if two ten-inch planks, a hair mattress, and a blanket, may be called a couch. I knew the whole programme so well.

First hour. Tickle, tickle, tickle by the fleas. The drowsy god, a horrid fiend; the sinking into sleep, a falling into fathomless abyss; then a starting bolt upright, wet with cold sweat, intense

darkness weighing upon the brain. Howling of dogs or fiends; howling and scratching at the very planks under your bed; devilish tintinnabulation of all unholy sounds about you. Tickle, tickle, tickle, the one recurring air in this devil's overture.

Second hour. A sinking off into a sleep, which is more like a swoon; inexpressible incubus of nameless horror brooding over you; sleep, a long struggle against infinite hopeless bewilderment, till your soul rallying in one last despairing struggle, you awake.

Third hour. Blessed morn, whose refracted beams are now showing a patch of gray on the wall of my gloomy hut. Blessed day-father, the very herald of whose coming, chilly dawn, drives the dark shadows home to their brooding mother, darkness! Ah, that I had some litany to sing to thee, bounteous sun-god!

Fourth hour. The fleas have sunk to sleep, their night commenced, and drowsy god to me in most benignant shape tranquil descends. A pause in the overture; but the skilful composer, the father of it—husband too, I should say, of foul mother darkness just gone—anon strikes up, and still maintains the air, with multitudinous variations—no longer with soft string, but now with sounding brass. Hum, tickle, buzz! hum, tickle, buzz! The flies begin. Farewell, drowsy god. Repose impossible.

Fifth hour. Let me now woo the fair nymph presiding over fountains, that she may pour refreshing streams over my fever-parched skin.

‘Tomkins, my tub!’ I shout into the morning air.

My gloomy thoughts are all at once scattered by the sound of approaching hoofs, and in a cloud of dust appears a clattering group of officers, richly gilt. Among them too a man I know—an old chum of mine—Assistant Commissary-General Bunk.

‘Come along, Mumps; come and dine at Balaclava. Have a jolly lark after at Kadikoi. Winding-up accounts, eh? O, bother accounts; come along.’

I went; and as we galloped away towards Balaclava, I broached to my friend Bunk a thing which bothered me.

‘Bunk, have you got any pepper to spare?’

‘Pepper? No. I’ve got a million pounds of wood to the good, no end of hay, lime-juice too, hogsheads of it; but pepper—no.’

Understand, dear reader, that these are not actual bodily stores we are talking of. They are only figures of account. In theory a commissariat officer was responsible for all stores delivered into his charge to the utmost carat. As, for the most part, he had no means of checking the quantities transferred to him, and as in issuing rations to large numbers there is unavoidable waste and loss, it frequently happened that, on winding-up his accounts, the commissariat officer found himself vastly out in his calculations, most frequently on the wrong side, sometimes on the right. It chiefly de-

pended on the storekeeper. If he had a lavish hand, your balances suffered; if a stingy one, you often rejoiced in surplus. Now in winding-up, the surplusage of one man was, by an arrangement among the various officers, exchangeable against the surplusage of another man. Thus, if A had a nominal surplus of a thousand hundred-weight of hay and a deficiency of a hundred pounds of tea, whilst B suffered from a deficiency of hay and a plethora of tea, by mutual exchange of vouchers each was in a position to wind-up his accounts satisfactorily. The arrangement was a defensive weapon against red tape, and answered very well.

'What shall I do, Bunk? I've got an awful deficiency in pepper. How much? Five hundred pounds.'

'Whew! I'm afraid you won't get anybody to let you have that. I know pepper's scarce with everybody;—but five hundred pounds! Well, don't bother yourself. If it comes to the worst, they can only make you pay for it.'

It's amazing how much worry and bother a just and reasonable temper entails upon a man. Bunk would never have incurred such a deficiency. His storekeeper would no more have ventured to hint at such a fact to Bunk than he'd have ventured to jump down his throat. And he would have squared it somehow, without Bunk knowing anything about it. But I had investigated the matter patiently, and had found the storekeeper not to blame, the fault being, indeed, in the leaky nature of the tins which held, or failed to hold, the pepper. Much of the five hundred pounds I was now short of was no doubt, could it have been traced, lying in the bilge of one of her Majesty's transports.

Well, I dined at Balaclava, and shared in the lark at Kadikoi—a lark which involved a collision with the Provost Marshal, and the contingency—happily never realised—of half a dozen courts-martial.

But I felt better for it, considerably better—more fit to face the pepper question, which had been brooding over me so long. On my return to camp I sent for my storekeeper.

'Flook, we'll go down to the store-hut and see about this pepper.'

The pepper had been enclosed in small tins, which again were enclosed in casks. Some half-dozen of these casks lay about the storehouse. At the bottom of each cask was a small quantity of dark matter which had once been pepper—a portion of the leakage from the tins.

'Here's some of the lost pepper, Flook,' said I, pointing to the casks.

'Ay, there's a poond or twa there, sir.'

'That's a long way off five hundred though, ain't it, Flook?'

'Verra true, sir.'

One end of the hut was vacant of stores. It abutted on the

storekeepers' huts, and had been used by them as a receptacle for the ashes which had come from their wood-fire.

'What the deuce is all this, Flook?' said I, stirring the heap of ashes with my foot.

'It'll just be the wood-ashes we put doon here, sir.'

'Flook,' said I, looking intently into the heap, 'I'm certain there's some of my pepper here.'

'Noo for certain, sir, I'm sure—'

'Hold your tongue, Flook; I'm sure there's been an escape of pepper here. Fetch a sieve. Now riddle a little of that into yonder cask. Didn't I tell you? That's my pepper to a certainty.'

'Weel, it's verra like it, sir,' said the Scot with a grin.

'Now, Flook, don't you leave that heap till you've riddled my five hundred pounds of pepper back again; and then we'll have a board and condemn it.'

Which we did.

THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

CHAPTER XXIX. LORD PENNYROYAL ON HATS.

THEY all slept well that night; even Mr. Marjoram had rest from his troubles. They had both of them a night to make up, and so Mrs. Marjoram woke up next morning in a very good humour for her. It was a lovely day, with a gentle breeze, and everything was so sweet and fresh after the rain. It was a good sign, too, that every one was down to prayers. It must be confessed that Amicia would have given anything to skip them, and have another hour at least in bed; but she dared not. She was afraid she might give an advantage to Florry if she were lazy, and so she came down five minutes before the time, to be quite safe. It is so easy to be early when one's heart is set on anything.

Of course Lord Pennyroyal was punctual. He was a clock that needed no regulating; and if the Horse-Guards clock, or even 'Big Ben' of Westminster, were as regular as Lord Pennyroyal, why, it would be better, though they are on the whole excellent time-keepers. He was always wound up, and his works—we mean his internal works, the springs on which he acted—never wanted regulating.

'A punctual husband makes a punctual wife,' says the proverb; and if Lady Pennyroyal had been an unpunctual person, a long course of living with Lord Pennyroyal would have made her as regular as himself. But she was both punctual by nature and by practice, and so she was doubly punctual.

Florry and Alice were there. Even Count Pantouffles was there. Mr. Beeswing brought him under his wing, and had convinced him he was not committing a mortal sin in listening to family worship.

'Besides,' he said with great inconsistency, forgetting his former scruples, 'I will not confess this sin, *mon cher*, and then my director will know nothing about it.'

Lord Pennyroyal was very gracious, both at breakfast and afterwards. He was not very fond of young men. He looked on all young men as a source of expense, and was always wishing that he had daughters, because in the long run they cost so much less than boys. 'You must educate a boy,' he said, 'whatever his talents may be. But if a girl is ugly or stupid, what's the good of teach-

ing her anything?' If he had been a Catholic, perhaps he have treated such unhappy girls as that humorist, Rabelais, posed, and shut them up in convents and nunneries.

Whenever, therefore, Lord Pennyroyal condescended to to young men, he did it in the way of example and advice.

On that memorable morning of June the 3d, 1870, Lord Pennyroyal took advantage of the rise after breakfast, just as he was taking on his hat to take a turn on the terrace, to ask Harry Edward—we are not sure that he did not include Count Pantouffles as well, but certainly Harry and Edward—

'What do you young men do with your old hats?'

Whether he meant it or not, Count Pantouffles felt there was any question of hats he ought to answer. No man in the world probably wore out so many hats in the year, and so he said:

'When I have done with them, I give them to my valet.'

'And a pretty penny he makes out of them, I'll be bound,' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'I wear mine out,' said Harry. 'I'm sure I don't know how they become of them.'

'I throw mine away, or leave them at the club, or in the way, like an old umbrella,' said Edward.

'What waste in both of you! Waste will be the ruin of both.'

Then he paused, and slowly lifting his hat from off his head, added:

'What do you think this hat is worth?'

Count Pantouffles looked into it and recoiled. It was the finest hat inside you ever saw, and that of course is saying a great deal.

'I am sure I cannot say,' said the Count.

'Half-a-crown,' said Harry; 'but I don't think I should like to invest in it.'

'There you are wrong,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'This hat is worth at least five shillings.'

Then he proceeded, and asked seriously a question often asked of in London streets, in jest:

'Who is your hatter, Mr. Fortescue?'

'Lincoln and Bennett,' said Harry.

'And mine too,' said Edward.

'There you are wrong again to go to so expensive a firm when you have no hatter,' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'Where, then, do you get your hats?' asked Count Pantouffles with a vacant stare.

'Depend on it,' whispered Harry to Edward, 'he steals them. If we were to steal them, we should be taken up; but he is a peer and has privilege of Parliament. No man dare take him up.'

'I buy them everywhere and anywhere,' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'Anywhere and everywhere! I don't understand,' said Pantouffles. 'Is it the name of a firm?'

'I mean,' said Lord Pennyroyal positively, 'that I have no fixed hatter, but that I buy my hats, now at this shop, and now at another.'

'Very interesting,' said Count Pantouffles. 'Why take so much trouble?'

'It is not only interesting, but it is very economical,' said Lord Pennyroyal; 'and so you will say when you hear my plan.'

'Let us hear it,' said Harry, much in the same tone as a curate with a bad cold says, 'Let us pray.'

'Well, then,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'when I think my hat is getting shabby, say like this, I make up my mind to sell it.'

'To sell it!' said Harry and Edward and Pantouffles in one breath. 'To sell it!'

'Yes, to sell it,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'Where's the harm?'

'O, none at all,' said Harry. 'I only thought you might not like to have a Jew into your house in Grosvenor-square, and bargain with him for your old hat.'

'Young man,' said Lord Pennyroyal, with a severity quite equal to that of Colonel Barker, 'it is not my custom to bargain with old clothes men.'

'I thought you might,' said Harry.

'Not at all,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'When I go back to town, I shall put on this hat, and walk down Holborn, or the Strand, or the Regent's Park; and when I come to a hatter's, I shall go in. It must be a second-rate hatter's, for your expensive shops don't like it. When I try on a hat; and when I have got one to fit me, and they name the price, I say, How much will you give me for my old hat? and if they name what I think it is worth, I pay the difference, leave my old hat there, and walk off with the new one. If they won't give me my price—I shall ask five shillings for this—I go on till I find a shop that will give it. That's what I do with my old hats, and that's why I said I had no hatter. Do you understand now, Count?'

'Perfectly,' said the Count. 'It does you much credit.'

'O, if you would only sell your old hats, Count, you would save so much money!' said Lord Pennyroyal enthusiastically.

'I am afraid it is too late to begin. My valet is too accustomed to them,' said Count Pantouffles.

After telling this story, Lord Pennyroyal put on his hat and turned out on to the terrace, while Harry and Edward went into the same avenue to have a 'weed.'

'Nasty old hunks!' said Harry. 'Who ever heard of selling one's old hats? And with such an income!'

'It is very mean,' said Edward. 'I suppose some day or other it will be all the better for Rosemary.'

'Now mark my words,' said Harry. 'Lord Pennyroyal will live till he is ninety. How old is he now—seventy? Well, that gives him twenty years more to live. How old is Rosemary—thirty-seven? Well, when he succeeds he will be fifty-seven. Say he has 400,000*l.* a year. He'll have more, but say only 400,000*l.* a year. Don't you think that he would be a much happier man, say, with 20,000*l.* a year now, than if he had to wait all those years to come into that enormous fortune? He'll get his money when he can't enjoy it, and when he's an old man. Give me my money when I'm young.'

'Well, old fellow, you have got it,' said Edward, 'and so have I. It isn't very much, you know; but, such as it is, we have both got it; and I really do think we enjoy life.'

'Of course we do,' said Harry. 'For my part, I wouldn't be any one else than Harry Fortescue for all the world.'

'Nor I,' said Edward. 'I was going to say even if I were Harry Fortescue; but, after all, I think we are both better as we are.'

'There can't be a doubt of it,' said Harry. 'And now let us go and look after the ladies.'

CHAPTER XXX.

IN THE SHADE BY THE RIVER'S BANK.

THAT was Friday morning, you know, and the great question to be settled in the drawing-room was, what was to be done during the day. You know Mr. Sonderling was coming to luncheon; but what was to be done between breakfast and that meal? It was too fine to stay at home, that was certain. Even Count Pantouffles and Mr. Beeswing gave up their billiards, and there was a longing for the open air in the whole party, which was quite refreshing.

Sir Thomas Carlton, on account of Lord Pennyroyal, for once gave up going to town to superintend the issue of the Timbuctoo Loan. It was soon settled that he should drive Lord Pennyroyal over to his model farm, where, what with draining works, and show-horns, and chaff-cutters, and clod-crushers, and scarifiers, they might spend the time profitably till luncheon. Lord Pennyroyal, like a wise man, never killed his time; he spent it, and got interest out of it. True to his character, he had spent many thousand pounds in draining and improving his estates, and building good cottages for his tenantry. Not fine, uncomfortable, architectural cottages full of smoke and draughts, but solid, well-planned, well-drained square cottages, very plain outside, and very nice inside. He had scarcely ever made a speech in his life; and on one of these rare occasions he had expended eloquence which, if reported, would have

filled two columns of the *Times*, in denouncing to his face the iniquity of a pretender who had built him a dozen cottages, every one of which smoked. We need hardly say that builder never had another chance of suffocating Lord Pennyroyal's peasantry by smoke. 'A smoky chimney,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'is worse than a scolding wife. A man may do without his wife, but, in this climate at least, he must have a roof over his head; and if the rooms under that roof are to be filled with smoke from morning till night, what can a poor man do but go to the beer-shop?'

Lord Pennyroyal, therefore, was as glad to go with Sir Thomas Carlton as Sir Thomas to show him his improvements, and the two started in high spirits.

'Dear Lady Pennyroyal,' said Lady Carlton, 'I should so like to drive you down to the river at the bottom of the chase.' And turning to Florry—'Don't you think, Florry, you might persuade some of the party to walk down to the river? there's shade, you know, here and there all across the park, and down on the bank there are lovely trees.'

'I'll try and persuade them,' said Florry. 'Who's ready to follow me to the river? Hold up your hands.'

The result of this was, that every one but Mrs. Marjoram and Count Pantouffles held up their hands.

'Why don't you hold your hand up, Count?' said Amicia.

'Because it is too hot,' said the Count.

'Too hot! too hot to hold up your hand!'

'O no,' said the Count; 'too hot to walk. I am not a good walker.'

'Perhaps mamma will take you in the pony-carriage,' said Florry. Then turning to Mrs. Marjoram, she said, 'Perhaps Mrs. Marjoram would like to go, and then there would be no room for you.'

'O, pray do not think of me,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'I seldom go out before luncheon; and besides, I have my diary to fill up and letters to write. My time will be fully occupied.'

'In that case,' said Lady Carlton, 'we can find room for you, Count; but I am sure it would do you a deal of good to walk a little more.'

'I do walk so much in town,' said the Count; 'in the country I try to rest.'

So the ponies were ordered; and before they came to the door, the rest of the party assembled on the terrace, like swallows gathering for a migration. Florry and Alice and Amicia were among the first. They dressed as it were by steam, fearing that Harry Fortescue might be snapped up by the other side. Then came Colonel and Mrs. Barker, and Mr. Marjoram, and last of all, in a group, Harry and Edward, and Mr. Beeswing and Count Pantouffles.

'Are we all ready?' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Then start fair, pray see how slow we can go. Let it be a donkey-race to the one in which the last in wins.'

Then they plunged into the sunshine, though it fortunately was not nearly so hot as it had been the day before. They made straight for the river, which was about a mile off, and could be seen winding round the park like a silver snake; and every now and then they stopped for shade under a huge oak, or chestnut, or beech. The very first of these, Harry Fortescue threw himself on the grass and said they ought to make a long halt, it was so hot.

'I quite agree with you,' said Amicia, sitting down by him. Mr. Beeswing and the rest were for going on, and leaving the pair by themselves.

'They are like over-driven cattle,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'you see lying so demurely in the middle of a London street. They must lie till they are rested, for no power on earth can get them up.'

'Do you know, I feel very much like a cow myself,' said Lady Sweetapple, throwing herself down on the grass. 'And, Alice, I am sure I look quite white with fatigue. You had better sit down; and so too, Mr. Vernon; and let the rest go on to the river.'

'What stuff!' said Colonel Barker. 'Why, we have just marched—I mean walked—two hundred yards; how can any one be tired?'

'That depends upon constitution,' said Florry. 'Fatigue comes on some people so suddenly. I felt strong enough till we got under the heat of the sun, and all at once I felt so tired, just like Lady Sweetapple; I felt I could not stir a step till I had some rest.'

'I don't understand it,' said Colonel Barker; 'our men march straight right across the Runn of Cutch without turning a hair.'

'O, pray run down to the river with your Runn of Cutch!' said Harry; 'it makes me hotter than ever to hear of it.'

'Well, if they won't they won't,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'We must leave them as they are; but I call it very wilful of Florry.'

'Now do go along,' said Florry, 'and mind you walk as slowly as a tortoise, as you said—I won't name the animal you named, because I don't want to hurt your feelings; but mind and walk as slowly; and then as soon as Lady Sweetapple is rested, and the rest are rested, we will jump up and run on and catch you up, and be the first to the river's brink before you. Now do be off, there's a good man.'

So the five young ones were left sitting on the grass under the shade. When they were gone, Lady Sweetapple said,

'Why don't you say something, Mr. Fortescue?'

'Madam,' said Harry, mimicking Mr. Sonderling, 'I refused to say anything. They all laughed at that, and even Amicia laughed, though

felt the very mention of Mr. Sonderling brought her on dangerous ground.

'Yes,' said Florry; 'capitally imitated, Mr. Fortescue. What a strange man Mr. Sonderling is! Have you known him a very long time, Lady Sweetapple?'

'A very long time,' said Amicia.

'Before you were what you are now?' said Florry.

'Of course,' said Amicia; 'how could it be otherwise?'

'But I mean before you were Lady Sweetapple?'

'Before I was Lady Sweetapple,' said Amicia, nodding assent.

'And if it is not very rude,' said Florry, 'might I ask what your name was before it was Sweetapple?'

This, we know, was very rude of Florry; but you must forgive her, for she was only rude because she was so fond of Harry Fortescue. She was cruel, as all women are when they have their rivals, as they think, on the hip.

'My name,' said Amicia, in her lowest and sweetest of voices, 'was Smith.'

'Amicia Smith?' said Florry.

'Yes, Amicia Smith, or, as my father always called me, Amice.'

'And pray where did you first see Mr. Sonderling? and did he know you very well?'

'At Frankfort,' said Amicia.

'Frankfort-on-the-Oder?' asked Florry, with a refinement of cruelty.

'No, Frankfort-on-the-Maine,' said Amicia.

'Did you live a long time there?' asked Florry.

'Yes, a very long time. It is the first place I remember in the world.'

'I remember,' said Florry, 'when I was there, going up the Rhine with papa two years ago, that we went over a very fine public building at Frankfort.'

'The Cathedral, the Dom,' suggested Amicia, 'or the Städel's Institute, or the Römer?'

'No,' said Florry, as soft as silk and as mild as milk. 'It was outside the city, on the Pfingstweide by the Rhine-bank; and it was called an institute, only not an art institute, but a charity. It was called the Deaf and Dumb College. Do you know it?'

'My father,' said Amicia, 'lived in that college. He was medical attendant to the inmates. I hope you do not think it any disgrace.'

'O no, not at all,' said Florry, ceasing from her inquiries.

'I think I am quite rested now, Mr. Fortescue,' said Amicia; 'we had better go down and join the rest at the river.'

'So am I,' said Florry. 'I feel as though I had never been tired at all.'

Then they all five sprang on their feet, and without any rests, really overtook the heavy division, as Harry called them, before they reached the river.

It was a pretty stream, a wilful water. Nothing could keep within bounds. Now it took a turn there, and then a bend there. Here it rushed with a great sweep, carving a 'monstrous cantle' of the right bank—we are all so wise about right banks and left banks since the recent war. Here it made an island; there a peninsula. Here was its old channel, all dry and deserted; there it had just begun to eat away the bank in search of a new bed. Though not very broad, it was very deep and very clear. It looked as if it were but a foot or two deep; and yet, if you put your foot in, you would be out of your depth at once. In its own heart it was resolved to be a river, and to give itself all the airs and graces of a river. It would not be a brook; and woe betide the unhappy man who, out hunting, called it a brook, put his horse at it, and floundered in. He was soon taught the difference between a river and a brook.

All along the bank on the High Beech side were willows—no willows, not pollarded, but large trees as large as those of which a few are still left on Christ-church meadows and Magdalen-walk on Cherwell's bank—Cherwell, that sweet stream which asserts its well its claim to be a river, though in parts you might almost jump across it. But the High Beech river—they call it the Wensome 'Winsome' river—was clearer and brighter than the Cherwell. It ran more through gravel and sand, I suppose; and it was filled with trout and grayling—more like a Hampshire than an Oxfordshire stream, in short. There it ran, 'the full and brimming river,' bright in the sunshine of the 3d of June. Farther up, away from the banks were clumps of trees, and here and there an oak which almost rivalled King Edward's tree in the girth of its bole and the spread of its branches.

Under one of these stood the pony-carriage, from which Lady Carlton had alighted with Lady Pennyroyal and the Count—constant Count, constant in his outward polish and internal emptiness. He was not at all unlike a well-cleaned boot, bright and shining outside, but inside all hollowness and dirty leather.

'Before you, after all,' said Lady Carlton. 'We thought you were never coming.'

'Your ponies are fresh, mamma,' said Florry, 'and don't mind the heat. We had to rest ever so long under a tree.'

Then they all walked down close to the river, and sat down on the bank under the shade of one of the tall willows, and looked at the shoals of fish, and watched a pair of water-ousels, dashing in the stream, walking under water, emerging with a fish, swallowing it, and then diving down again to repeat the same feat.

'What pretty black and white birds!' said Amicia. 'I have often seen them in Germany when I was young, along the Rhine-bank.'

'There goes a kingfisher!' said Edward—as if he need have said so!—as the beautiful bird which ladies' hats will soon extirpate made its peculiar dart along the water, out of the shade into the sunshine, and, striking its fish, returned again into the shade.

'That bird is like life,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Out of gloom and shade into the warm sunshine for a little space, doing something; and then back into the shade again.'

'But suppose one does nothing?' asked Count Pantouffles; 'what then?'

'In that case,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'you could, I am afraid, be neither called a man nor a kingfisher.'

'You see,' Mr. Beeswing went on, 'the kingfisher—there he darts again—for all his bright dress, gets his living by doing something, and doing it very often.'

'He must find it very dull,' said Florry, 'doing the same thing over and over again for hours and hours, and days and days.'

'He likes it, because he knows no better,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Besides, I daresay he does not find it at all dull. He is feeding his wife and family by his work.'

'Very like a clerk in a bank, or a merchant's office, only they know better.'

'But what better could a man do,' said Colonel Barker, 'than feed his wife and family?'

'I will tell you, Colonel,' said Harry, 'when I have a wife and family; but I am afraid if my wife and family live by my exertions, they will not have much to live on.'

'O, Mr. Fortescue,' said Florry, 'I thought you were at the Bar!'

'So I am,' said Harry, 'and so is Edward. We're both at the Bar, are we not, Ned? And what did we make the first year?'

'Not over much,' said Edward Vernon; 'not enough to pay our clerk a guinea a week between us. But then you know, Harry, we never tried.'

'Try!' said Harry. 'Did we not go circuit and hear Mr. Justice Sharp make his famous jokes? Did we not hear him try ever so many old women for stealing fagots, just as Sinaminta the gipsy told us, and ever so many poachers? and was not one man sentenced for cutting his wife's throat, and hanged, and a wife for poisoning her husband, and pardoned?'

'Very true,' said Edward; 'and we went to sessions also, and saw all the lesser offenders tried; only we never got a brief; and we sat days and days in Westminster Hall in our wigs, as wise as owls, and still we had no briefs.'

'Yes,' said Harry, rather bitterly. 'In town the attorneys said we were too great swells to care about business, our hands too clean to do the dirty work of the law; so they gave their briefs to their own sons, whose birth was low enough and their hands dirty enough, Heaven knows, for any work. That is what we find in town; in the country it is worse. There, at sessions and circuits, we find what is called a strong local Bar, which recorders, and even judges of assize, are so fond of flattering. But, bless you, this strong local Bar is only another form of the attorney grievance. It is all made up of the sons of local attorneys. No fellow can compete against such a dead attorney weight all over the country.'

'What a long speech!' said Amicia. 'It makes me think you would get on very well at the Bar, Mr. Fortescue, if you only had a chance.'

'That's where it is,' said Harry. 'At Oxford, where I was a little known, I did once have a brief, because one of the local Bar had over-eaten himself at some swanhopping corporation feast down at Sandford, when his father—of course "the eminent attorney," as the local penny-a-liners called him—was mayor. It was for poaching, of course, and I had to defend the accused. What was the result? I sat up half the night and prepared an address to the jury, which must have got the prisoner off; but when the case came on next morning the wretch pleaded guilty.'

'But if he was guilty,' said Alice, 'oughtn't he to have pleaded guilty?'

'I don't know anything about that,' said Harry. 'Edward had better answer you, Miss Alice. All I know is he spoilt my speech, my maiden and only speech; for I had never had anything before but a motion, of course.'

'But,' said Mr. Beeswing, who was rather in a crucifying mood this morning, 'oughtn't both you and Edward Vernon to be in court at this very moment, in Westminster Hall, or at Guildhall, following your profession?'

'Of course we ought,' said Harry.

'Why, then, are you not there?'

'Because we're here, and far happier,' said Harry, throwing a stone at a water-rat, which was cautiously trying to swim across the stream a little higher up.

Then he went on with triumph: 'Hit him, by Jove, and turned him! See, he's coming back to this bank.'

'Then you're not like the kingfisher,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'who, in all his rich apparel, given him, as Darwin says, to make himself lovely and adorable in the eyes of his mate, works and toils, and dives and darts, from morning till night, to feed his family.'

'As for that,' said Harry, 'it seems to me that life like the kingfisher's, if it's all work, is not worth having. I prefer play,

though I don't mind working a little ; and if you must know, that's why Edward and I are here. We prefer play ; and having enough to live on and pay our way, we had rather be here at High Beech, in your most agreeable though rather catechising company, instead of listening to an argument *in banco* before all the judges in the land. We are very happy here ; and I don't think either the attorneys or the attorneys' sons, or Mr. Justice Sharp himself, will miss us on this glorious summer day.'

'But you heard good things sometimes on the circuit,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Not many,' said Harry. 'They said it was a dull circuit, and so I thought it. The only good thing I remember hearing, Mr. Justice Sharp said. The other judge was Mr. Baron Blinker, who can't see two feet before his nose, and always makes a sad hash of his notes. He never said a good thing within legal memory ; but Mr. Justice Sharp did say a very good thing.'

'What was it?' said Lady Carlton. 'That is, if it's a good thing in which ladies may share.'

'It is a story suited to the capacity of both the sexes,' said Harry. 'You must know that on our circuit were two barristers, one very tall, and one very short. I'll call the tall barrister Biggs, though his name of course isn't Biggs at all ; and the other Manikin, though his name isn't Manikin either. Well, one morning when we went into court, it so happened that Mr. Biggs, the tall man, was sitting next to Mr. Manikin, the short man ; and in the course of business Mr. Manikin rose, fully primed, to address the court. Rising is a legal term, and means that when a man speaks in court he gets on his legs. So Mr. Justice Sharp, when Mr. Manikin rose, looked at him sternly for a minute, and said solemnly,

"Mr. Manikin, it is usual for counsel, when they address the court, to stand up."

"But, my lord," said Mr. Manikin indignantly, "I am standing up."

"Then," said Mr. Justice Sharp, "Mr. Biggs, may I trouble you to sit down?" And so that eminent judge hit both those worthy counsel, against whom it was whispered that he had rather a spite, with one stone.'

Every one laughed at this story, except Count Pantouffles, who could not see the joke.

'How with one stone ? I do not understand. Did he throw a stone, and hit them both ?'

'Just so,' said Mr. Beeswing ; 'and I think he made a very good shot. I shall tell that story again, Harry, and I sha'n't say where I got it from. Don't you betray me if I tell it in your company.'

'Why,' said Edward, 'every fellow knows it in Westminster Hall.'

'Very likely,' said Mr. Beeswing; 'but then the fellows in Westminster Hall—those attorneys' sons of whom you were talking—don't often, I am thankful to say, dine where I dine; and so, for some time at least, I shall have the story all to myself.'

'But, Mr. Fortescue,' said Amicia, 'have you no ambition?'

'Not much,' said Harry. 'At my time of life, ambition is nearly all taken out of one, after one has had so many disappointments.'

'That is not behaving like the kingfisher. He very seldom misses his mark; but when he does, he doesn't sit on a stone and sulk. He tries again, and so he goes on till he has fed his wife and family, as Mr. Beeswing says, and after that he fills his own crop; and then, and not till then, he sits on a stone and—'

'Reflects, as Mr. Sonderling says,' said Harry.

'Digests, I should say,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'I make no distinction between reflecting and digesting. The ruminating process is the same in both states.'

'And recollect,' said Harry, 'by the time the kingfisher has fed his family, and filled his own crop, he is an old bird, and fit for nothing else. He, at least, has no ambition. His strength is to sit still.'

'Yes,' said Amicia; 'but you will not, or you cannot, understand. Of course a man, or for that matter a kingfisher, has no ambition when he is old. Ambition in the old is an uncomfortable feeling or passion—the desire to get something which can never be fulfilled. But in the young, at your time of life, Mr. Fortescue, it is the noblest incentive to action. There are no great men who have not been ambitious in early life.'

'Yes; but I am not a great man, and never shall be one,' said Harry.

'You might be, if you chose,' said Amicia sharply.—'Don't you think he might, Mr. Beeswing?'

'I don't know,' said Mr. Beeswing. Then in a melancholy way 'I am afraid both Harry and Edward are too like me to get on. They're too idle, too fond of lying by the side of clear streams with lovely women, and other men as idle as themselves; and so, and so the stream of life runs by, and they find themselves idle obstinate old fogies, who have never done a day's work in all their lives that they could help. You see, if a man runs cunning, and shirks work in England, there's no chance for him. Without work as constant as that kingfisher, no man can succeed in England.'

'It's a great pity,' said Lady Pennyroyal, who was a thorough Tory; 'and that's how it is that great posts are filled with loved democratic people, who have nothing to lose; and so the taxes are laid on the rich, and taken off the poor.'

'And isn't that a very good arrangement?' said Florry. 'Su

pose the taxes were laid on the poor, why, they couldn't pay them; but somebody must pay them, and so the rich would have to pay, after all. It would come to the same thing.'

'But I mean the poor, or the lower classes, if you like the term better, ought to bear their share,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'If they don't, they will lose all self-respect, and we shall have, as Lord Pennyroyal says, annual parliaments, members paid to tax other people, and a redistribution of all the landed estates in the country.'

'Dear me, how shocking!' said Lady Sweetapple.

'It has been done in other countries,' said Mr. Beeswing; 'and what has been done there might be done here.'

'I don't much care,' said Harry. 'They won't level down to us, I suppose, Ned. They can't say that you or I have much stake in the country, though our money is in the Funds.'

'That's just what I complain of,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'Young men say they don't care, and expect us to take that as an answer. Why, it's no answer at all. They ought to care; they ought to care to succeed at the Bar, to go into Parliament, to be good speakers, to take office if they're fit for it, to be good clerks, heads of departments, governors of colonies, foreign ministers, and ministers of the crown; but they don't care to take the pains to begin. They will never put their best foot forward, and so all these offices fall into the hands of low people. That will be the ruin of the country.'

'But if the low people have the wits and brains,' said Amicia, 'and are fitter for all these places?'

'That I deny,' said Lady Pennyroyal stoutly. 'Our class have better wits and brains than any other class in the country. Look too at the vantage-ground from which we start, with our lands, income, and social position; and then don't tell me that our young men ought not to outstrip every other class in the country in any competition, if they would only take the pains. But they are idle, they are lazy, and won't take the pains.'

'But it's so pleasant to be idle,' said Harry; 'especially when it's so hot.'

'I am afraid you are incorrigible,' said Lady Carlton. 'Thank you for your story, Mr. Fortescue, and for your frankness. At any rate, we have been very lucky; and if we have not been quite as industrious as the kingfisher—there he darts again—or as the water-ousels, at any rate we have had some very improving discourse, and I hope both you young men will lay it to heart.'

So they walked towards the pony-carriage, where the ponies had not led a life of idleness; for the flies tormented them so that they had hard work to keep them off, even with the help of their groom.

'Count Pantouffles,' said Lady Carlton, 'will you get in?'

This she said after she and Lady Pennyroyal had taken their seats.

'Certainly,' said the Count, with a smile and a bow, which showed that, in his opinion, smiling and bowing were as music and painting among the liberal arts. If any thought ran through the rooms of his empty head, it was, no doubt, that a man who had raised bowing and smiling to the dignity of the liberal arts could not be said to have spent his life in vain. Before Pantouffles came, bowing was a mere fashion; he had made it a law; seized the mere habit and custom, and made it an institution. Compared with other bowers, he was as a sober man amongst drunkards. For him, then, Lady Pennyroyal's reproaches had no force. Whatever Harry and Edward might be or do, his time had not been wasted; and he might sit down and eat three full meals a day with as safe a conscience as the kingfisher, which he so much resembled in the splendour of his attire.

The walking party returned, not as they had come down to the river, in detachments, but in one body. They were gay and joyous, and no one could see, from Amicia's behaviour, that she felt the least hurt at Florry's cross-examination under the tree. And so, with many jokes and jeers from Mr. Beeswing, and denunciations from Colonel Barker and his wife and Mr. Marjoram against the idleness of young men of the present time, they reached the Hall, puffing and panting, and there found Mr. Sonderling waiting for them, deep as usual in his own thoughts.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MISS EDITH PRICE.

Now we must go to quite another place; but first we must say the reader has been very good and very patient with us. Many a time they must have said to themselves, 'We wish, quite as much as Lady Sweetapple, to have this mystery cleared up about Miss Edith Price. Is she a lady, or a low-lived person such as Mrs. Crump imagined her?' Dear reader, do you think we should take you into bad company? Why will you not put faith in us to bring you through a story which shall offend no one? You may take our word for it, Miss Edith Price is a thoroughly respectable person; and if any proof were needed of it, we may tell you that she lived with her mother at No. — Lupus-street. 'But the mother might not be respectable,' you object. We tell you they were both respectable, both mother and daughter; but they were very poor. Poverty—we have it on high classical authority—made men ridiculous in old times; and really, with all our Christianity, we are not sure that it does not make men just as ridiculous now in the nineteenth century. In London, we should like to know, what can a poor man do? If you say that every poor man can support him-

If in London, we are glad to hear it; but if we are to believe you, what becomes of our heavy rates, which increase, year after year, in geometrical progression? 'O, but,' you say, 'a respectable poor man.' We are glad to hear it again; but if a respectable poor man support himself here in this Babel, which we altogether deny, what, we ask, is a poor respectable woman to do, especially if she has been born and bred a lady? Can she support herself? We doubt not. 'O yes, she can!' you will say. 'She can go out as a governess.' Yes; the mockery of it—go out as a governess! A young and tender woman—mind you, she must be young, for no other, if she can help it, will have an old governess—yes, a young tender woman has to compass square and street, rushing hither and thither, across parks and along crowded thoroughfares, without rest; and all for what? To teach idle and ignorant and stupid children for half-a-crown an hour—a magnificent support! Is this only, remember, provided she can get enough of it. If she is not very successful and not have kind friends—for, strange to say, the people are kind even to governesses—she may only have one shilling a day, for whom she has to walk about in all weathers, lest the omnibus should swallow up her half-a-crown, or five shillings, she's so lucky as to get so high pay. Yes, she may go out as a governess; and that is about all she can do. She might, of course, go out as a 'young lady' in a barmaid's place, or as another 'young lady' in a refreshment-room or a tobacconist's shop; or she might go out as a 'young lady' at a milliner's, as Kate Nickleby was, with what result we all know. But then, these are positions which no young lady born and bred could take. If she emigrates to Australia, they will tell her young ladies are a drug; there is no work to be had for them; they are not even fit for wives. A settler's wife would be of ruder and rougher and coarser stock. So your real young lady has to come back to England rather worse than she went. What becomes of all the poor young ladies no one can tell. One thing is certain—they can't live cheaply in the country, as they used to do the days before railways; for London prices have come down on the town with the iron road and established themselves everywhere; that cheapness, like modesty, has fled to heaven, where we hope to renew our acquaintance with both of them some of these days.

We have got so far, therefore, in our inquiries as to Edith Price, and her younger sister lived with their mother. They were poor, but very respectable, and they did nothing for their living; for Edith was only just old enough to make up her mind to go out as a governess. Indeed, she was trying hard to go out, but could hear of nothing to suit her. How, then, did they live, and who supported them? Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon. 'We ought to blush to write it,' you say, Mrs. Propriety. Not at all; it is rather you who ought to blush, horrid old hag, for your wicked suggestion.

Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon supported both these young ladies, and, more than that, their bedridden mother also, out of the competence with which they were cursed. We do not blush for them, but are proud of them. It was their great virtue, and not their vice. Yes, they supported this helpless family; and, more than that, not a soul knew of their generous act, save those three lone women. You see at once, therefore, that they were capable of noble deeds, these two idle young men; for they did it out of the comparatively small income. It would have been nothing for Lord Pennyroyal. He might have written them off a cheque for 20,000*l.* and so revealed himself to the widow and her orphans as a special providence, and never missed it. The only difference was, that Lord Pennyroyal did not do it out of his superfluity, but Harry and Edward out of their deficiency. And it shall be remembered unto the end for good, in this story at least.

On that morning of the 3d of June, while Lord Pennyroyal was instructing Harry and Edward how to make money out of their hats, Edith Price and her little sister Mary were sitting by the mother's bedside, in their lodging on the second floor of No. 12 Lupus-street.

'Has it come this morning, Edith?' asked her mother in a faint voice.

'No, mother,' said Edith. 'It is very odd; Mr. Fortescue is so regular. I can't think what can have happened.'

'The last week's rent is owing,' said Mrs. Price in the same low voice.

'Yes, mother; and the baker and the butcher have to be paid.'

'I know it,' said Mrs. Price. 'Bitter is the bread eaten by the almsgiving; but bitterer still is it to have nothing wherewith to buy bread.'

'It will come, mother—I mean the cheque,' said Edith; 'and then, you know, I hope soon to be able to go out as a governess and support you and Mary.'

Having said this, she bent over and kissed her mother's weathered face, and went away into her own room and wept bitterly.

But those were not Peter's tears. He denied his Master; but Edith Price had only denied herself. Hers was a hard life of self-denial, and almost privation; and if she wept now, it was not for sin, but for shame and sorrow that she had not wherewithal to pay her way.

We of course, and the reader, who, however strait-laced, we hope, by this time convinced that, in introducing them to the Prices, we are not leading him or her into bad company—we know the reason why the cheque never came. We know how anxious Edward was that it should go, and how Harry had answered that he had sent it in a letter. We also know, from the confession

Mrs. Crump, what became of the letter; and as she mentioned the cheque, this is a farther proof that the story she told her mistress was true, and that the letter had really been burnt downstairs at High Beech. We also see that what is one person's fun is another's grief, and how those high jinks and scrambling for letters in the housekeeper's room led to real misery in Lupus-street.

'I must write a letter to Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith. 'It will kill mother if the rent and bills are not paid.'

To say was to do with Edith Price. Thoroughly feminine, she was a woman of action; but when she shook the tears out of her eyes, and sat down to write, she said,

'How stupid I am! When he last wrote, he said he was going out of town. I must go to his chambers to find out his address. He must have written, and there must be some mistake.'

'I am going out a little step, mother,' said Edith. 'I sha'n't be very long; Mary will sit by you till I come back.'

'Go, darling,' said her mother in a faint voice. 'Mind and take care of yourself in the streets.'

'Yes, mother,' said Edith; and she was gone.

Lupus-street is not a very lively place. We say this with the fear of the Lupine race before our eyes, who, we believe, fancy it is an extremely pleasant place. Retired butlers, not of the Ormond family, but limping Podagers, full of ale and years, take houses there, and let out lodgings. Widows of clerks in the Customs, or superannuated clerks themselves, take houses there, and do the same thing. They are very worthy people, doubtless; but worthiness does not always go hand in hand with cheerfulness, either in town or country. Certainly it is not so in Lupus-street, with its box-like houses, and its 'lodgings to let' stuck up at the parlour-window of every other house which is not a shop.

Mrs. Nicholson, the landlady of the house where Edith Price lodged, was a very good woman; but she had a drunken husband, from whom she was separated all the week till Saturday night, when he used to pay her a visit, more than half-seas over, and refused to leave the house till she had paid him what he called his allowance. Think of that, you masters and mistresses who are now and then vexed with drunken servants, and think they give you so much trouble! Remember the condition of a woman with a drunken husband, who insists on seeing her every Saturday night. Mr. Nicholson was what might be called Mrs. Nicholson's absent trouble; and her present one, from which she was never parted, was a family of six or seven children, which the generous Nicholson had begotten, and then left her to bring up.

'O,' said Mrs. Tanner, a great friend of Mrs. Nicholson, 'which it was from having been in the same service with her, if the male men was only like them male birds we read of, which it is their rule

to look after all the young ones themselves, the female birds having no trouble, then Mrs. Nicholson might ha' got some good out of her good-for-nothing husband, which at present he was of no kind of use to her.'

In this somewhat involved sentence, or at least in the doctrine of the rights of wives laid down in it, we entirely agree; and if we ever have to create the world over again, we will take care to make all husbands do their duty, and, let us add, wives also.

'Thank you, Mrs. Nicholson,' said Edith Price, as her landlady opened the door for her. 'I sha'n't be very long away.'

'Bless her pretty face!' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'If men are made as she is, she won't be long before she gets a husband. But as men go,' she said with a sigh, 'perhaps she's just as well without one.'

Mrs. Nicholson was right. Edith Price was a very pretty girl, rather slight, very dark, almost too dark, with an olive skin, and great black eyes, and real black hair; but not that scrubbing-bruise Spanish hair—real soft black glossy hair, and plenty of it. She was the sort of girl that men looked back after when they passed her in the street; though no man could say that Edith had ever looked back at herself, or given any man the least encouragement. There was a natural dignity and grace about her which protected her; and she always said that it did not the least matter if one walked alone in London, so that one walked straight on as fast as possible, without looking either to the right or to the left.

So there she is, scudding away along the shady side of Lup street, to take the boat at Pimlico-pier for the Temple, all to find out at Harry's chambers where Harry Fortescue was.

'I don't think I've ever been so far alone,' said Edith; 'but it doesn't matter, I shall be home to dinner.'

She just caught the steamer at the pier as it came up, and was in half a minute seated on the deck. Away sped the boat to Lambeth-pier; and then, shooting across the stream, through one of the arches of Westminster-bridge, to Westminster-pier, and soon to Hungerford, Waterloo-bridge, and finally the Temple. The boat was running down, and the weather fine. Altogether, she rather enjoyed her 'ride' in the steamer, as a fat old woman by her side called it; and she was soon tripping up those horrid steps at the end of Essex-street, which the sooner they are pulled down the better.

'I shall soon know all about it, and I will write the letter, Mr. Fortescue will get it to-morrow. That will be Saturday; he will send the cheque at once by morning mail, and we shall get it on Saturday night; and Mrs. Nicholson will have her money before Mr. Nicholson comes.'

It is not far from Essex-street to Pump-court, with its chain up pump, formerly so famous for pure water, now merely a gas-sewage-trap. But there was still the inscription at the foot of

pump, 'Nothing whatever is to be thrown into this sink,' as though the water of that pump were, as the well Zem-Zem, of priceless worth. If Edith had known Latin, she might have paused to construe another inscription on the portico facing you at the end of Pump-court, which tells how the old colonnade of the Templars having been destroyed by fire, these new erections, *nova hęc*, had been raised at the cost of the Middle Temple, where please to admire the conceit of the *nova hęc*, and then wonder at the taste which could supply the place of a splendid mediæval cloister by such an architectural absurdity as those columns, and, after all, have the face to boast of them.

But Edith Price could not read Latin, and so she was spared all criticism on the bad taste of those Benchers two centuries ago. One would think our modern Benchers would have let such an inscription perish by time and dirt; but no, they continue to boast of their new erection, and every two or three years the inscription is repainted, and will be repainted, we suppose, as long as the Temple exists.

This is what we see and say every time we pass through Pump-court. That *nova hęc* is an eyesore to us; and we would do like the Pharisees, and pass by on the other side, if we could; but we can't, so we have to see it and endure it every day. But Edith saw none of these things. She thought not of pump, or cloister, or inscription, but only of getting to Harry Fortescue's chambers as fast as ever she could. 'I shall soon get the address,' she said as she ran up to the first floor, to the serious inconvenience of an old laundress, who was crawling downstairs like a black-beetle, with a pitcher in her hand.

'I beg your pardon,' said Edith, going up two stairs at a time.

'Now I shall have it,' she said for the third and last time. But when she saw the door on which was written, 'Mr. H. Fortescue, Mr. E. Vernon,' she found it fast closed; the 'oak was sported,' in fact, to use an Oxford phrase. There was no getting in by knocking or hammering; and out of the slit for the letters hung a grimy label, on which was written, 'Gone into the country to sessions. Return in half an hour.'

Now, if Edith Price had been a clerk in the Temple, or even a barrister in that cobwebby place, she would have known that if Harry Fortescue had really gone to sessions, he was not likely to be back in half an hour. But she was not a clerk or a barrister, but a young lady of nineteen, and so she believed the label, and went away, saying,

'It's very provoking. I must come back in half an hour, and then I shall get the address.'

So she went off, and walked through Whitefriars, looking for St. Paul's, which she knew was somewhere there. When she emerged

from the ancient Alsatia, the most improved part of London in late years, she got into Bridge-street, Blackfriars, and then she asked a policeman her way to St. Paul's.

'St. Paul's, miss?' said the gallant policeman. 'You must be a stranger. Why, the way to St. Paul's is up Ludgate-hill; but you can see the dome and the ball and cross up yonder, if you will only lift your head.'

So Edith lifted her head, and looked as he pointed; and sure enough, there was the top of St. Paul's before her.

'Thank you; now I know my way,' she said, and tripped off.

'A very likely girl that,' said the policeman, using a common expression, though, except that it is a term of admiration, we have never been able to find out its exact meaning.

So Edith Price mounted Ludgate-hill, and got to the front of St. Paul's, and actually found her way in and saw what was to be seen inside for nothing; and the vergers wanted her to see all that was to be seen for something, and even to go up into the ball and cross. But poor Edith had only sixpence in her pocket, and she knew that would not go very far with vergers, and besides, she was getting hungry.

After she had seen the really hideous monuments in St. Paul's and felt the cold shudder we all experience in that magnificent but most unecclesiastical building, she thought, 'The label said return in half an hour. It must be quite twenty minutes since I left Pump-court. I'll go back, and this time I am sure I shall get the address.' dress.'

So down Ludgate-hill she trotted. Yes, trotted is the word, she went so very fast; and in Bridge-street she saw the same policeman, who gave her a nod, and said to himself, 'There goes that likely girl back again;' and she soon threaded the lanes of Whitefriars, and passed through the Temple-gate, and flew across King's-bench-walk, and into Tanfield-court, for she thought, 'If I'm not back in half an hour, perhaps I sha'n't get the address after all.' Under the colonnade she flew, and up the stairs to the first floor, and what do you think she saw? Why, the same label sticking out its ugly lip from the slit in the door, and again telling her, 'Gone into the country to sessions. Return in half an hour.'

'How provoking!' said Edith again. 'Can Mr. Fortescue or his clerk have come in and gone out again, or has no one been here since I went to St. Paul's?'

Just then she heard a slow heavy step on the stairs, and as she looked round, she saw the same old laundress crawling upstairs, even more like a black-beetle than she seemed before, for she was much more grimy. What she had done in that half hour is not recorded, but she looked as though she had spent it in a heap of cinders, rolling herself over and over, to make the colour cling to her.

But this aged Cinderella was as precious to Edith Price just as any princess with a diamond slipper. No doubt she was Mr. Fortescue's servant, and could tell her where he was.

When at last the grimy old heap of clothes had climbed up to the landing, and began to stare at Edith with her lack-lustre eyes, she seemed about to say something, but Edith anticipated her by asking,

'Are you Mr. Fortescue's servant?'

'No, young woman, I am not,' said the old woman. 'I belong to this staircase as laundress, put in here by the Honourable Society. Mr. Fortescue ain't in no ways my master, but what may you be wanting of him?'

'I want to know where he is; I want to find him,' said Edith.

'So there is, I daresay, a many as want to find him, which it is not so easy to find a gay young gentleman. Mr. Fortescue ain't been here for more than a week; no, nor Mr. Vernon either. They're both gone off for a lark into the country.'

'But what does this paper mean?' asked Edith, pointing to the bel.

'What does it mean? It means nothing.'

'Nothing!' said Edith. 'Is all this about going to sessions returning in half an hour nothing?'

'That's what it comes to, miss. My name's not Martha Briggs it tells a word of truth.'

'But why, Mrs. Briggs,' said Edith, 'why do they put it up?'

'Why, you see, my dear,' said Mrs. Briggs, growing familiar, and patting Edith on the shoulder with one of her grimy paws, 'the young man—that's Mr. Bowker—always sticks up that notice as soon as ever Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon go out of town.'

'The young man!' said Edith mechanically; 'what young man?'

'Why, the young man their clerk. As soon as they go off on their lark, their young man goes off on his'n. So he writes that notice in his best hand, and puts it up there, and never comes a-nigh the place till the day when he expects them back.'

'He ought to stay here to take in briefs and answer questions,' said Edith.

'So he did ought, my dear,' said Mrs. Briggs, 'but then he can't. As for briefs, it's not many of them that comes up here. My young gentlemen are not regular enough like. It's Mr. Yellow-baw down below as gets all the briefs. He never goes to sessions, nor returns in half an hour. He knows better. As to questions, may I be so bold as to ask what question you want answering?'

'I want to know where Mr. Fortescue is,' said Edith. 'Can't you tell me?'

'No, indeed I can't,' said Mrs. Briggs.

'Can't you let me into the chambers, that I may look for his address?' said Edith.

'Not if I knows it,' said Mrs. Briggs in terror. 'Let a young lady into my gentleman's chambers? Not if I knows it, miss. What would the Honourable Society say, let alone Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon, when they come to know it?'

Then seeing how downcast Edith was, she went on,—for with all her griminess Martha Briggs was a kind-hearted old soul,—

'Bless your dear heart, if you did go in you would see nothing but law-books and old newspapers, and dust and black-beadles. You won't find his address, he's taken that away with him in his card-case.'

'I don't know what to do,' said Edith.

'Why don't you go to his other addresses?' said Martha Briggs.

'What are they?' asked Edith.

'Don't you know?' said Mrs. Briggs oracularly. 'Why, there's the University Club in Suffolk-street, and there's Mr. Fortescue's other lodgings in Pimlico.'

'Pimlico!' said Edith. 'Why, that's where I have just come from.'

'Then go straight back to Pimlico, unless you like to call at the University Club by the way; and if you can't find out either at the club or Pimlico, I'm sure I can't tell you.'

'But Pimlico is a wide place,' said Edith.

'So it is, I dessay,' said Mrs. Briggs; 'a very wide place; but I can't tell you anything more particular about Mr. Fortescue's lodgings.'

'I must go to the club, I see,' said Edith.

'So you must,' said Mrs. Briggs; 'but I must be off to look after my Irish gentleman upstairs, which it is he that sits up all night, and sleeps all day; so I wishes you good-morning, miss.'

And then Mrs. Briggs began to climb up another flight, pitcher in hand, and muttering as she went.

Poor Edith had no choice left but to go to the club, and then, though the porter was very unwilling to give it, she found that Harry Fortescue lived in Eccleston-street, Pimlico. He told her besides he was sure he was out of town, as he had not been in the club for days.

So she passed along Pall-mall and across St. James's-park. She did not stop to admire the beauty of the façade of Buckingham-palace, nor was she run over on Mr. Ayrton's new road, for it was not then made. Even the beauty of the trees and shrubs did not tempt her to loiter; she was bent on finding out Harry Fortescue's address, and on writing to him. When she got to Eccleston-street, Pimlico, not half a mile from Lupus-street, she knocked, and the



door was answered by Mrs. Boffin in person. Mrs. Boffin was a lamb to Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon. They were real gentlemen, and never looked after their bills, and still less after their tea and sugar.

'We are made to be robbed,' Edward said to Harry, 'and we can just afford Mrs. Boffin's larcenies. What's the good of finding her out? We are very comfortable here; and if we changed we might not be so comfortable, but we should be sure to be robbed all the same.'

So the lazy pair went on winking—morally we mean—at Mrs. Boffin with both their eyes, all for the sake of peace and quietness.

But Mrs. Boffin was very terrible to some people. A lamb to her betters, she was a wolf to her inferiors, and if there was one class to whom she considered herself immeasurably superior, it was unprotected young women.

When therefore Mrs. Boffin opened the door of No. — Eccleston-street, Pimlico, and saw it was only what she called a young person, she simply stared at her and said nothing.

'Does Mr. Fortescue live here?' said Edith Price.

'If he does, what do you want?' said Mrs. Boffin, in a tone of great asperity.

'I want his address,' said Edith; 'I want to write to him.'

'What about?' said Mrs. Boffin.

'That I can't tell you,' said Edith, bridling up just a little. 'Besides, you haven't told me yet whether he lives here.'

'O, haven't I, miss?' said Mrs. Boffin, with a toss of her head.

'And suppose I don't choose to answer your question?'

'That would be very cruel,' said Edith in a very melancholy tone.

'We're obliged to be cruel in this world,' said Mrs. Boffin, rather softly for her. 'Ladies in my position is forced to be cruel, especially to young persons whose business we know nothing of.'

'I'm not bound to tell you my business,' said Edith, recovering her self-possession.

'And I'm not bound to tell you if Mr. Fortescue lives here. There's no law to make me say it.'

'None, except that of Christian charity and kindness,' said Edith reproachfully. 'Perhaps too if Mr. Fortescue knew I had been asking for his address and you wouldn't give it, or even tell me if he lived here, he mightn't like it.'

'That's your way of taking it, miss,' said Mrs. Boffin. 'But what I have to say to myself is, perhaps Mr. Fortescue mightn't like it if I go giving his address to any young person who chooses to come and ask for it.'

'Then you will not say?' said Edith.

'I will not,' said Mrs. Boffin, as if all the laws of the Medes and

Persians were rolled up and 'bodified,' if we may use the word, in her person.

As she said these words she slammed the door in Edith's face, and retired to her back kitchen, remarking as she went,

'What a pert young person! Not bad-looking, though.'

Edith Price stood for a moment on the doorstep after this very spiteful proceeding on the part of Mrs. Boffin, and then slowly turned away.

'What a very cross old woman!' she said; and then she walked away to No. — Lupus-street, heavy at heart; for she had spent all the day in trying to find Harry Fortescue's address, and had not succeeded.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH THERE ARE SOME EXPLANATIONS.

WHEN the walking party reached the Hall—which they did at the very hour that Edith Price was having that interview with Mrs. Briggs on the landing in Pump-court—they found Lord Pennyroyal and Sir Thomas returned from the model farm, and Mr. Sonderling walking about on the terrace in his usual reflective mood.

'Luncheon will be ready directly, Lady Sweetapple,' said Florry, 'and papa can't bear to wait;' and as she said this, she dashed upstairs, hoping that Lady Sweetapple would not be down in time to have any *tête-à-tête* with Harry Fortescue.

As for Amicia, she was almost for the moment as reflective as Mr. Sonderling. She was no snob; yet she could not help feeling that if Mr. Sonderling had not turned up in that strange way at High Beech, that confession of her maiden name, and her father's position at the Deaf and Dumb College, might have been spared her. But she had her consolation even in Florry's triumph.

'I like Harry Fortescue,' she said to herself; 'he did not seem to think it mattered in the least whether my name was Smith and my father a doctor in an asylum. Yes, men are so much more charitable than women; that's why I like them, and especially Harry Fortescue.'

She changed her walking-dress quickly, leaving Mrs. Craympo little opportunity to exercise her craft; but still she was beaten by Florry, who, according to Palmer, just tossed her things off and on anyhow, and then ran downstairs long before the gong sound ed. She found most of the party in the hall, Mrs. Marjoram listening to Mr. Beeswing's account of the conversation by the river, and Lord Pennyroyal telling Mr. Marjoram all about the model farm. When Lord Pennyroyal once got on arterial drainage, he was as lengthy as a Cheshire squire upon old meadow and cheesemaking. The conversation between the cousins had been going on for some time,

and seemed, humanly speaking, likely to last for ever. But between the two fires—we mean between Mrs. Marjoram's tongue and Lord Sennoryal's discourse—Florry found an opportunity of going up to Mr. Sonderling.

'I am so glad to see you, Mr. Sonderling; I want you to tell me all you know about Lady Sweetapple when she was Miss Smith.'

'That would indeed be a long story,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'I have suffered much from Miss Smeess.'

'What did she make you suffer?' asked Florry. 'Do tell me. Was she a great flirt?'

'She was an angel to me once,' said Mr. Sonderling mournfully, 'and then she was a demon.'

'How could she be both?' said Florry.

'Very lightly—what you call easily,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'Consider the ancients. Was not the demon of Socrates also an angel—an emanation of the everlasting ghost?'

'The everlasting ghost?' said Florry. 'I really do not understand.'

'That is because your eyes are blind and your ears dull,' said Mr. Sonderling solemnly; 'because you do not understand your own nature and your own tongue.'

'Really,' said Florry, 'I think I do understand my own tongue when it says anything.'

'What do you understand by the Holy Ghost?' said Mr. Sonderling.

'The Holy Ghost is the third Person in the blessed Trinity,' said Florry, like a dear little High Churchwoman as she was.

'So the Christian Formalists say,' said Mr. Sonderling scornfully; 'but what does ghost mean?'

'It means ghost,' said Florry doggedly.

'But if you were to hear a man say he had seen a ghost, what could he mean?'

'A disembodied spirit, I suppose,' said Florry.

'O,' said Mr. Sonderling, putting his forefinger oracularly up the side of his nose, 'now we have caught him.'

'Caught what?' said Florry.

'The meaning of ghost,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'He means spirit; and when I said the "everlasting ghost," I meant the everlasting spirit, from whom the angels and the demons also are an emanation.'

But Florry had no notion of being led away into the regions of emanations and ghosts; she wanted practical knowledge of Lady Sweetapple and her works, and so she tried to bring Mr. Sonderling back to common sense by asking,

'But Miss Smeess, was she an angel?'

'Ach!' said the German, with another of his deep sighs, 'I

will you a story tell. When I was nineteen, and a student at Heidelberg—but see, there she comes, gliding down the staircase, not a ghost, but a body. I cannot, and I dare not!

With these words he retired into his inner man, and poor Florry was left as puzzled and as ignorant of his early relations to Lady Sweetapple as before.

‘Dear Miss Carlton, how charming you look after your walk!’ said Lady Sweetapple. ‘The sun has not burnt you in the least. It always catches my face in spite of my three veils.’

This was said in the gentlest way; but the fact was, that Lady Sweetapple meant to let Florry know that her face was redder than it ought to have been. For the sun had caught Florry’s face just a little, and the excitement of talking to Mr. Sonderling had flushed it from within, so that she looked as if she were a great deal burnt; very much, in fact, as young ladies look who have been to the races.

‘Is my face very red, Alice?’ said Florry, as they went in to luncheon; ‘that odious woman has been telling me it is. I must say I feel like a Red Indian.’

‘Yes, darling, I must say it is a little red. You take no care of your complexion out of doors, and in the house you are always exciting yourself, and lighting what I call the fire inside. How can you expect your face to be anything but red? But never mind, it will wear off when you are happier.’

‘When will that be?’ asked Florry.

‘O, that depends upon yourself—who can tell?’ said Alice; ‘all I know is, I am very happy.’

That luncheon was much as other luncheons till towards its end. It was one of those hot but fresh days which make every one very hungry in the country. The air acts on the digestion like bitters, and makes one ravenous. For some time therefore there was steady eating, even with the young women—for as to old ones, they generally eat as much as men; appetite for food comes with them as they advance in life. The more they eat, the more they want; except in very rare cases, few women over fifty have died of spontaneous starvation. Small blame to them for this, we say. It does us good to see all men and women, both young and old, enjoy their natural food, and we should say this if there were fifty thousand Mrs. Marjorams reading that homily on gluttony and drunkenness out loud to us at once. Man likes a hearty eater just as much as both man and Heaven a cheerful giver. The sound of knives and forks, the frothing of beer, the popping of corks as claret cup was made, the rattle of plates, went on then for some time. Podager evidently expected every one of that company to do his duty, and they did it. As for Mr. Sonderling, he displayed some wondrous dexterity at the sword exercise in shovelling peas into his mouth with his knife.

At last there was a pause in eating, and sweet dishes were

ought round. Mixed with them came crabs and lobsters, and Lord Pennyroyal was tempted to take some of the first dish, in spite of the protestations of Mrs. Marjoram that crab was the most unwholesome thing that any man, let alone a peer of the realm with so many thousands a year on his back, could possibly eat. But Lord Pennyroyal, whose digestion was as good as a man's ought to be who has such a balance at his bankers', persisted in his desire, and was just breaking a claw of the crustacea, when Mr. Sonderling, who had been looking on with silent admiration, uttered these words,

'Cancers to eat with decency is difficult.'

'Cancers!' said Mrs. Marjoram, holding up her hands. 'Who ever heard of any one eating cancers?'

'They are most deliciouz,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'but I give in that they are very sickness-causing.'

'They are a disease in themselves,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'One can't eat a disease.'

'I did once know a man,' went on Mr. Sonderling, 'who did eat cancers in the beautifulest manner. His fingers, when he had done eating them, were never smutty, and he ever broke them in the just places.'

'What does he mean?' said Mrs. Marjoram to Mr. Beeswing.

'He means what he says, no doubt,' said Mr. Beeswing, wishing to torment the tormenter of Marjoram. 'I don't see why one should not eat a disease; and then, think of the livers out of which Strasbourg pies are made.'

'Don't believe him,' said Florry, who considered Mr. Sonderling rather in the light of an ally. 'Mr. Sonderling only made a little mistake. No doubt he has looked out "krebs" in the dictionary, and seen that it means both crab and cancer, and he has only misapplied the name of the crustacean to the disease.'

'Just so, just so,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'I did mean crab when I said cancer, and it wondered me much to see my lord handle his crustacean with such agility.'

Even Mrs. Marjoram laughed at the mistake when it was explained. There are some people always ready to see a joke when they are told what it is, and so it was with Mrs. Marjoram and Mr. Sonderling's cancers.

After that the repast came to an end, and the question now remained how to spend the afternoon till five-o'clock tea recalled the party to the house.

Florry Carlton would again have tried to make Mr. Sonderling disclose his secret, but he was as timid as a fawn. When she attempted to coax him into the conservatory, he said,

'I have haste, miss, I have haste; I must away.'

'Why go away in such a hurry?' said Lady Sweetapple. 'I want you very much here;' and then, to Florry's amazement, Amicia

walked off with what she called her prey into the very conservatory into which he had just refused to go.

'Did you ever see anything like that, Alice? Here's Lady Sweetapple walking away with Mr. Sonderling under my very eyes.'

'Why not?' said Alice. 'I'm only happy that she does not try the effect of her fascination on Edward. You ought to be thankful that she leaves Harry behind her.'

'So I should,' said Florry, 'if I did not think that she is making her game with Harry all the time that she is conversing with Mr. Sonderling in the conservatory.'

Meantime, what had become of that lazy pair of friends? They had gone up into Harry's bedroom, and were discussing the state of affairs in general, and at High Beech in particular.

'I tell you what, Edward,' said Harry, 'I don't half like the look of things. You are hard and fast in love with Alice Carlton. Don't deny it; I see it in both your faces.'

'I'm not going to deny it,' said Edward; 'somehow or other I am very fond of Alice Carlton.'

'And she knows it?' asked Harry.

'Well, I don't know that, but I think she feels it,' said Edward. 'That is, I think she cares for me.'

'And what are you going to do?' asked Harry.

'I haven't thought of that,' said Edward. 'It's very jolly here and so it will last for a day or two. When did we come, and where are we to go away? I have really lost all account of time since we have been here, except that it seems very jolly.'

'You're a miserable lotus-eater,' said Harry. 'Let me ask you one thing: do you expect to marry Alice Carlton? Why, she'll have at least a quarter of a million, if not more.'

'I never thought of that,' said Edward. 'All I know is, that I like her and she likes me.'

'I shall take you away back to town as soon as I can,' said Harry. 'I call your conduct disgraceful—an abuse of the sacred rights of hospitality, as the ancient Greeks would have said.'

'Harry,' said Edward solemnly, 'I wish you would not cram the ancient Greeks down my throat. We are moderns; we are not ancient Greeks. You are worse than old Sonderling, with his reflections, and his cankers, and his book-staves. I hate the ancient Greeks. I always did. They walked about without clothes. If you doubt my word, go to the Academy Exhibition, and see how our artists, who have made the lives of the ancient Greeks their study, represent them on canvas. Really, they have hardly a shirt or a shift to their backs. They are worse than the late Mr. Vandenhoff when he played the Ghost in *Hamlet* in a pocket-handkerchief. Parodying our German friend, one might say, "To depict the ancient Greeks with decency is difficult." I should say it was impossible. So let

us have no more about the ancient Greeks, whose customs and manners were as bad as those of the Scythians, but let us enjoy ourselves as long as we can at High Beech, with no homilies or moralising.'

'What an oration, what a philippic to come out of a young man's mouth on such a hot day!' said Harry. 'Believe me, Ned, it was only because I saw you running in love without knowing it, that I spoke in warning.'

'All very fine,' said Edward. 'I think I hear a crocodile warning all the other beasts against hypocrisy and false tears. I should like to know what you have been doing ever since we came down here. If I have been making love to one woman since I came, you have been doing the same to two.'

'On my honour—' cried Harry.

'Don't speak to me,' said Edward.

'I will speak,' said Harry; 'I say I am not making love to two women. I see two women who are not indifferent to me, either of whom I think very nice; but as to making love to them, my behaviour has been so passive that no one can call it love-making on my part.'

'Do you find it pleasant?' asked Edward.

'Not so bad,' said Harry, 'if it will only last. But mark my words: trying to be good friends with two women who are both fond of you is as awkward a game as running with the hare and holding with the hounds. In the long run, no fellow can keep it up.'

'Why then do you try?' asked Edward.

'Because I can't help it,' said Harry, 'and, to use your own excuse, because it's very jolly!'

'Then we are agreed after all, and need not have had this explanation,' said Edward. 'We are both doing what we can't help. I making love to one charming young woman, and quite content to let the world wag on in its own way. With me there is no longer father or mother, sun or moon, land and sea, but only love for Alice. That's my delight. I prefer to sit by one woman's side; you like to sit between two, who are pulling their caps and tearing their hair for you. You are a moral sandwich, the thin slice of meat between two bits of bread-and-butter; holding your own and belonging as yet to neither. Take care the one or the other doesn't gobble you up. But what's the good of talking to you about what you don't understand? You haven't had an answer from Edith, I suppose?'

'How could I?' said Harry. 'Why, the cheque only went off yesterday!'

'True; I have quite forgotten time and space,' said Edward.

'Poor thing, I do hope she will get the cheque all right. I say, Harry, it must be a dreadful thing to be so very poor.'

'Dreadful, but not degrading,' said Harry. 'It's not so bad as

for a fellow with an income under a thousand a year to make a young lady with expectations of a quarter of a million.'

'That's not the way to look at it,' said Edward.

'Perhaps not; but that's the way the world will look at your friends will call you an adventurer.'

'None of my friends, only my enemies, Harry,' said I tenderly. 'Come, now, you'll never call me an adventurer.'

'No,' said Harry, 'not even if you invade this El Dorado win all the golden regions of Lombard-street as your own.'

'That's all I care about,' said Edward. 'You and Alice and you; you two are the whole world to me!'

'Was there ever such a donkey?' said Harry, 'such a demented Neddy?'

'I tell you,' said Edward, 'I can't help it, and it's so j

When the two friends had got so far in their explanation knock came at the door, and when it opened, Harry heard that Carlton wanted to know if Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon were to go out for a walk.

'Tell her ladyship we'll be down directly,' said Harry; and in a minute or two the two friends ran down that slippery staircase the hall, only to find that the whole party were waiting for them out on the terrace.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AMICIA AND MR. SONDERLING.

No doubt all our readers are anxious to know what Lady Apple said to Mr. Sonderling in the conservatory. We are fortunately enabled to gratify them on this point, even though they were not present. The very first words she said were:

'Carl! can you forget?'

'I can forget nothing,' said the German. 'How could I?'

'Why, then, did you tell Miss Carlton my name?'

'Because I thought you had forgotten me,' said Mr. Sonderling.

'As if I ever forgot!' said Amicia. 'Do I not still remember the Pfingstweide, and the Eschernheimer Tower, and the Heimer Thor, and the monument to the Hessians who fell at Friedland, and Sachsenhausen, and the blue-coated Prussians, and the blue-coated Austrians?'

'I remember much more than that,' said the German smiling.

'So do I,' said Amicia, much in the same tone.

'I remember when Amicia Smeess was my *braut*, my betrothed.'

'So do I,' said Amicia.

'I remember when your father the doctor did say we

make a pretty pair, and when my mother at Marburg began to stitch my wedding clothes. Do you remember that?’

‘I do,’ said Amicia.

‘And I remember hearing when I came back to Frankfort, from a visit to my parent, the shock I felt when I heard that an English lord had come and carried away my bride, and that she and her father were gone for ever from Frankfort without one line of explanation or a word of adieu. Do you remember these things?’

‘I do,’ said Amicia.

‘Why, then, do you ask me why I told Miss Carlton your name, when you had thrown it away and forgotten me to become the wife of an English lord?’

‘He was not a lord,’ said Amicia feebly.

‘So much the worse,’ said the German. ‘It would have been some consolation to have lost my betrothed to a lord. Why did you do it?’

‘Because my father forced me,’ said Amicia. ‘He said it was better for me, and better for you to part so; and so we left the college and made no sign.’

‘It was very hard,’ said Mr. Sonderling. ‘All my spring-tide visions of life vanished, and I became old at once. And now the lord is dead?’

‘Sir John Sweetapple has been dead four years,’ said Amicia.

‘But why did you come to England?’

‘I could not rest in Germany after that,’ said the German. ‘I could not bear to tread the soil on which I had been so happy. I had *heimweh* of the worst kind—the hate, not the longing for home. My mother died soon after that. She never held up her head when she saw I was so unhappy. Then I sold all—the tobacco fabric and all that had been in the family one hundred and fifty years—the first tobacco fabric in all the country round! With the money I came to England; for it fetched much money; and since then I have lived here much happier than I could ever be in Germany, till you come here and make me unhappy all at once. It is a sore trial to see you again.’

‘But, Carl,’ said Amicia, ‘promise me one thing.’

‘Anything,’ said the German; ‘though your behaviour often makes me reflect on the injustice of Providence. Why could we not have lived at the Fabric and sold cigars, as my forefathers did, and then have died and left the business to our children, as my father left it to me? Ach Himmel! Providence is often very unjust.’

‘Don’t say that,’ said Amicia, ‘it pains my heart.’

‘What shall I say then?’ said Mr. Sonderling.

‘Promise never to tell any one that I was your betrothed.’

‘I may show it in my face and accents,’ said the German, ‘but

I have more self-respect than to parade my sorrows to the world. There is no sympathy, no *mitgefühl*, in this life for jilted men and women.'

'Very true,' said Amicia; 'and besides, what good would it do? We cannot recall the past.'

'Alas, no, we cannot,' said the German.

'Then,' said Amicia, 'we understand one another. We are good friends—almost as good as we were before; but you are not to tell any one what passed between us.'

'I swear it,' said Mr. Sonderling, grasping Amicia's hand; 'by all the gods, I swear it!'

'Swear only by one—the little god Cupid,' said Amicia, 'and I shall believe you all the more.'

'By him, then, I swear!' said Mr. Sonderling, and they came out from the conservatory, both, it must be mentioned, looking much happier than when they went in.

'We have been waiting for you ever so long,' said Florry impatiently. 'We did not like to disturb you, dear Lady Sweetapple because we knew it must be so nice to you to meet such an old friend as Mr. Sonderling, and have a talk about old times. Nothing does one so much good sometimes as to meet an old friend. He can tell one so much, and so can we him, if we choose. But, dear Lady Sweetapple, mamma wants so much to know if you feel equal to a walk this warm afternoon. You know we should not like you to faint again, as you did yesterday, all for nothing.'

'I am quite well, thank you, Miss Carlton,' said Amicia, 'quite equal to any exertion; and indeed it has been a great delight to me to meet Mr. Sonderling again. He is not the man to cut his acquaintances, though their names may have been Smith and their fathers doctors before they were married.'

'O dear no, of course not,' said Florry, not at all surprised, perhaps, to find Amicia showing her teeth at last.

'That shows she did not like what I said,' were Florry's words to Alice as they ran up to dress.

Had this been a sensation novel, or had Lady Sweetapple been a woman like some other Smiths, we would not have given much for poor Mr. Sonderling's life. He would have been poisoned with a cup of coffee, or lured away into a wood to be slain like a rabbit by a blow on the back of his head. As sure as fate he would have been a dead man. But this is a very sober story, and Amicia Smith was not as other Smiths. She preferred to effect her purpose—which, you all of you know, is to marry Harry Fortescue—by more legitimate, though not less certain, means. A moment or two had convinced her that she still maintained her ascendancy over Mr. Sonderling's mind, and she determined at once to work upon his old affection, and to conceal th

man cigar-maker had been anything more than acquaintances at Frankfort. You see, too, she was only just before Florry, who had all but wormed her secret out of Mr. Sonderling, and in fact still hoped to do so. So far, therefore, as the struggle for Mr. Sonderling and his information was concerned, Amicia had carried the day. She had a right to be proud, she thought, of her influence; and altogether she went up to get ready for the walk in a much better frame of mind than when she came down to luncheon. She would have been very nearly quite happy had it not been for that horrid Edith Price, who haunted her in such a way that she felt she could take no rest till that mystery was cleared up. 'It shall be done to-day out walking,' she said, as she again descended that black and slippery staircase.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EDITH PRICE PUTS IN AN ADVERTISEMENT.

Now we must go back to Edith Price, whom we left almost in despair after that interview with Mrs. Boffin. She had wasted a whole day, and was still unable to communicate with Harry Foretscene.

As soon as she got to No. — Lupus-street, she went to the bedroom which she and Mary occupied; for she was afraid to make her mother more ill by telling her unpleasant news. But the walls of lodging-houses are thin; their ill-fitted stairs creak and groan; and sounds, however slight, are heard all over them. Besides this, the ears of invalids are sharp, and Mrs. Price was anxious about Edith and her mission. It was not long, therefore, before Edith Price heard her mother's faint voice asking for her.

Of course all of you have been shocked at the notion of a pretty young girl like Edith Price running over half the town to a young gentleman's chambers, pursuing him to his club and his lodgings, and exposing herself to all kinds of risks, imputations, and temptations. It is the sort of thing, you say, you never wish to see your daughters doing. We reëcho your wish, and fervently pray that none of your daughters may ever be placed in a like position. All we add is, that if they are, we trust they may come as well out of their trials as Edith Price. And here let us ask, what else could she have done? She had no one to send, so she had to go herself. Of course you would have sent off a messenger, a running footman, a commissionaire, to do your bidding; but it must be remembered that Edith Price had no messenger; after she had paid for the steamer she had but sixpence in her pocket, and that would not go very far either in cabs or commissionaires. Nor do you—you people who roll about in your carriages, protected by tall footmen—know how very often the rest of the world, and especially of the world of women, find themselves just in the same position as Edith Price.

They have no one to do what they want done, and so they are obliged to do it themselves. Many 'young persons,' as Mrs. Boffin said, come to degradation and disgrace in the process, the more shame on those who drag them down; but there are thousands of others who can walk through the streets as proudly and as pure as Edith Price, to whom the very knowledge that they have work to do is at once a motive and shield. To all you good people, therefore, who have been expecting something dreadful to happen to Edith Price on her long and lonely walk, it must be a great consolation to find that her troubles were not increased by any indiscretion of her own. She had not succeeded in her object, and that was the only point in which she was worse off when she returned than when she left Lupus-street.

'Did you find the address, Edith dear?' said her mother.

'No, mother,' said Edith, 'all my trouble was in vain. I could not find Mr. Fortescue's address at his chambers, his club, or his lodgings.'

It was no use, Edith thought, to vex her mother by telling her more precisely what had happened, and least of all by saying anything of the insulting behaviour of Mrs. Boffin.

'It is very provoking,' said Mrs. Price.

'That's just what I said ever so many times,' said Edith. 'But I am tired of saying it any more. Let us now think what is best to be done.'

'I cannot bear to let to-morrow night pass without paying the rent,' said Mrs. Price, 'to say nothing of the weekly bills.'

'I think I had better ask Mrs. Nicholson what is best to be done,' said Edith; 'she is a good kind-hearted woman, and if it was not for her husband, she would care nothing for the rent.'

'Yes,' said her mother, 'but I am too proud to go on running in debt with her. It is bad enough to feel that we owe so much to Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon.'

'He says it's a pleasure and an honour, and so does Mr. Vernon,' said Edith.

'A pleasure and an honour, but not to us, Edith,' said Mrs. Price. 'Our only excuse is that, for the present, we have no other refuge but those two young men.'

'It is no misfortune to be poor,' said Edith.

'The greatest of all,' said Mrs. Price.

'Well, mother,' said Edith, unwilling to prolong the discussion, 'you try and sleep while I go down and get some tea, and after that I'll speak about it to Mrs. Nicholson.'

So Edith went down into their sitting-room, a back room on the drawing-room floor, and then she sat down on the dingy sofa and rang the bell with the dusty tawdry bell-rope, and in a moment or two Mrs. Nicholson appeared.

'Can I do anything for you, Miss Edith?'

Observe the 'Miss Edith,' which was a term of respect so very different from the 'my dear' of Martha Briggs, or the plain 'miss' of Mrs. Boffin.

'If you could give me a cup of tea and some bread-and-butter I should be so much obliged, for I have had nothing to eat since breakfast.'

'Nothing since breakfast, and it's now past five! Dear heart, you must be a-most famished. I'll bring you a cup of tea in two minutes. We've just had ours down in the kitchen.'

'Thank you so much, Mrs. Nicholson,' said Edith, as the good woman vanished, full of alacrity to bring up the tea.

'Dear woman!' said Edith, 'so very different from Mrs. Boffin. I wonder how it is that women are so different.'

In two minutes—yes, certainly, in less than two minutes—Mrs. Nicholson reappeared with a tray, on which was not a cup of tea, but a whole teapot, a loaf and butter, and the inevitable little jug of London particular sky-blue.

It was not a magnificent repast, but it had, in the way in which it was brought, all the heartiness and generosity of a feast. No prime warden of a City Company, no Fishmonger or Goldsmith, on the grandest banquet of the year, was more noble in his manner of dispensing a princely hospitality than Mrs. Nicholson of Lupus-street.

'Now do sit down, Miss Edith, and rest yourself. You look quite pale and thin after your walk, and well you may. You wasn't made to tramp along the streets, leastwise while the weather is so hot. Sorry I am that the tea has stood so long on the second water. But it's not so bad, this Kaisow; it takes the water beautifully when you don't drain the pot. Never drain the pot, Miss Edith, whatever you do. It's the only rule for tea-making. My poor mother used to say, "Betsy, never drain the pot."'

'I am afraid, Mrs. Nicholson,' said Edith, 'that our pot is drained in more ways than one.'

'Which ways?' said Mrs. Nicholson, looking puzzled, for she was not good at metaphors—very good along the road, but soon foundered if you took her across country.

'I mean,' said Edith, 'that we have not paid you the rent due on the 1st of June.'

'O, Miss Edith, pray don't think about that trifle; drink your tea, and don't drain the pot. If it wasn't for Mr. Nicholson, I shouldn't care if you never paid me. It is so nice to have real ladies in the house.'

'It is just Mr. Nicholson,' said Edith, 'that makes me so anxious. If he comes to-morrow night and makes a disturbance?'

'If he comes!' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'He's sure to come. No

clock strikes twelve at noon so regular as Mr. Nicholson comes here every Saturday night. He says what's his is mine, and mine his, and he knows his rights, and means to have them, which is half the rent.'

'I know it,' said Edith, 'and that's just why I want to pay you your rent before he comes.'

'But how can you pay if you haven't got it? Why can't you make your mind easy?' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'Let the rent run another week, and never mind Mr. Nicholson and his rights. You'll pay when you can, and the best can do no more.'

'I must try and find Mr. Fortescue's address,' said Edith, 'and I want you to help me, Mrs. Nicholson.'

'Be sure I'll help you all I can, Miss Edith,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'I'm only afeard it'll be little help you'll get out of me.'

'I have been thinking,' said Edith, 'that I had better put an advertisement in the second column of the *Times*, and then Mr. Fortescue will be sure to see it.'

'That's the gentleman—begging your pardon,' said Mrs. Nicholson—'as pays your mamma her annuity.'

'Yes,' said Edith, 'his name is Fortescue.'

'And a very good name too,' said Mrs. Nicholson with dignity. 'I was a born Devonshire woman, Miss Edith, and there's never a family as stands as high in all the West country as Fortescue.'

'Mr. Fortescue is of that family,' said Edith.

'I felt sure he were,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'We'em all proud of the Fortescues down in North Devon.'

'Well,' said Edith, 'I want to put an advertisement into the *Times* where Mr. Fortescue may read it. There must be some mistake about the money.'

'Dear heart, how clever!' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'I'd a never thought of that, though they do say we be all wise down in the West.'

'I will write the advertisement if you will take it to the *Times* office and pay for it, for,' said Edith bitterly, 'I have only sixpence in the world.'

'How much will it be?' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'It'll cost a mint of money, I'll be bound.'

'I am sure I don't know,' said Edith. 'Ten shillings, perhaps.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'I see I shall have to go to the bank.'

'The bank!' said Edith in surprise. 'What bank?'

'A very good bank, though it's not quite as rich as the Bank of England,' said Mrs. Nicholson with a genial smile—the smile that the consciousness of having money in hand always brings to the face. 'My bank, Miss Edith, is an old stocking, in which I keep all the money I save, and which Mr. Nicholson does not lay his hands on. It's not very full, but there's enough in it to pay for

your advertisement, I daresay. So I'll just take a sovereign out of the bank, and be off to the City in the train, and get it in-night.'

'You're so good, Mrs. Nicholson,' said Edith; 'I am sure I don't know how to thank you enough.'

'It's a pleasure to take trouble for you, Miss Edith,' said the landlady; 'and do now finish your tea, and eat your bread-and-butter, and then just lie down on the sofa, and have a good rest.'

'You forget I must first write the advertisement,' said Edith. 'I do not yet know what it will be.'

'Then do just think of it while I put on my bonnet and shawl,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'There's no time to be lost if that advertisement is to go in to-morrow.'

Again Edith said, 'What a dear woman!' and then she took a pen and sat down to write the advertisement.

'If I don't make it clear enough,' she said, 'Mr. Fortescue will not understand it. Will this do, I wonder?'

Then she wrote:

'Mr. Fortescue is requested to communicate at once with Miss Price.'

'No, that won't do—that's too clear, and he might not like it; but it must be clear all the same.'

Then she tried again:

'Lupus-street.—Mr. H. F——e is requested to communicate at once with E. P. The cheque has not arrived.'

'That will do,' said Edith. 'If any one in the house finds out that H. F——e means Mr. Fortescue, they will never guess what E. P. means, and so his secret will be safe. He will understand the last part of course.'

So by the time Mrs. Nicholson was ready, the advertisement was neatly written out, and off that good woman posted with it—a living proof that all lodging-house keepers are not as Mrs. Boffin, who would no more have thought of doing such a service to any young person, let alone behaving in such a Christian spirit in the matter of her rent.

When Mrs. Nicholson got out of the house, she made a turn or two like a carrier pigeon before it darts off on its flight, and then she struck out boldly for the Victoria Station; for, you must know, that if there was one thing more than another that Mrs. Nicholson detested, it was going on the sea in boats; and by the sea she meant all water, fresh as well as salt; and by boats, all boats, the penny boats included.

'One do feel a-most smothered down in the ground,' she said, as she took her return-ticket to Blackfriars; 'but, after all, it's better to be choked by the ground than by the sea.'

She reached Blackfriars Station with no accident, except that a drunken man would try to smoke in the third-class carriage, and

tried to put his head out of the window through the bars, 'to see if it was dark,' as he said. But the guard made him throw away his pipe; and his fellow-passengers, stout Mrs. Nicholson included, held him down when he had almost succeeded in getting his head through the bars, in which case it would have been dashed off.

'What a worrit drunken men are!' said an old woman sententiously.

'You may well say that,' said Mrs. Nicholson, reverting, perhaps, in thought to her own drunken husband, and his impending visit to-morrow night. 'Ah, if he only knewed what I have in my bank!' said Mrs. Nicholson, as she drew out her sovereign, and remembered with pride how many other coins of the same value she had left behind her in her old stocking.

When she got to the advertising office, she handed in her bit of paper and asked what it would be.

'Ten shillings,' said the clerk, almost mechanically, his practised eye at once guessing the value of the advertisement. Then, as Mrs. Nicholson put down her sovereign, he said, 'When do you want it to appear?'

'It'll be no use unless it goes in to-morrow,' said Mrs. Nicholson.

'You're just in time,' said the clerk. Then he wrote across the bit of paper 'To-morrow certain,' and laid it aside, to be put into type at once.

'It takes very little time to put in an advertisement,' said Mrs. Nicholson, as she put her ten shillings change into her pocket, and hastened out of the office on her way to the station.

The railway carried her back to Victoria in ten minutes; and in less than an hour after she had left No. — Lupus-street, the worthy woman stood at her own door.

'Bless me, Betsy!' she said, as her daughter answered the bell, as white as a sheet, 'bless me, Betsy, what's the matter?'

'Father's been again,' said Betsy, sobbing, 'and went up-stairs and rummaged your room, and he's carried off your old stocking, and he bade me tell you you was a good saving wife, and he was much beholden to you;' and then poor Betsy burst into tears.

'What, the bank gone! You never mean that, Betsy?' said Mrs. Nicholson.

'Yes, I do, mother,' said Betsy, unable to utter anything more.

'Well, I never!' said Mrs. Nicholson. That was all the poor woman said.

In a few minutes she went up to see Edith Price, and said:

'I have done what I said I would, Miss Edith, and paid for that advertisement. It cost ten shillings, and they won't repeat it unless you pay another ten shillings—that's their rule. But, dear me, Miss Edith, I'm sure you'll be sorry to hear that Mr. Nichol—'

have been here while I was away, and have carried off the bank all my savings.'

'O, I am so sorry!' said Edith, with great feeling, 'so very sorry! and when you were so good to me. Can't you run after him and get it back?'

'I am afraid, Miss Edith, the bank will melt like butter in a man's mouth with Mr. Nicholson—'tain't no use running after him. The only way is to set to work and save again. The worst is, now I have found out that I have a bank, he'll be always looking after it.'

'What a good-for-nothing man!' said Edith angrily. But pray heaven Mrs. Nicholson did not call him so. She could not help feeling how badly he had behaved, in her trouble at losing 'the bank,' but she was a woman of too much pride and self-respect to let her husband name.

'O, Betsy, Betsy!' said her mother, when she got downstairs, 'however did you come to let your father get at the bank?'

'Why, mother, father came in very cross-like, and said he wondered as how there was money in the house. He said he smelled it, and it was past the 1st of June, when you'd be having something coming in; and after hunting about the kitchen, he ran upstairs to his bedroom in the back attic, and there he saw the bank lying on a chest of drawers, where you had left it in your hurry, and he picked it up and was off, after those words as I told you.'

'It is very sad,' said Mrs. Nicholson.

'It is, mother,' said Betsy. 'I don't see the use of saving money at this rate.'

'It's one's duty to save, and not to spend, Betsy. Always lay something for a rainy day, Betsy. Never drain the pot, and then there will always be some tea left in it. But, dear me, to think that all those golden sovereigns—twelve of them all in a pot—should be now on their way to the public-house!'

'No, mother, there was never twelve of them?' said Betsy, holding up her hands.

'There was, Betsy, leastways there was thirteen of them, a father's dozen, this morning, Betsy, and now this ten-shilling piece and all that is left. It's downright dreadful!'

'So it is, mother,' said Betsy, the eldest born of Mrs. Nicholson, in whose eyes thirteen sovereigns made up a sum of untold treasures. 'Thirteen sovereigns!' she said, 'thirteen sovereigns! Well, I never!' as she put her little brothers and sisters to bed, herself being of the mature age of fourteen.

When her children were gone, Mrs. Nicholson sat down in the back kitchen, all alone, and had a good cry.

While Mrs. Nicholson was crying, Edith Price was not very far from doing the same thing up in her back drawing-room. She was a kind-hearted creature, and her first thoughts were always for others.

'How unjust,' she said, 'that this should have happened to a good woman, just when she was doing a most charitable act. She never would have lost her bank, if it had not been for my advertisement. What a luxury it would be to be able to make the loss of her bank to her! I thought there were now laws to protect wives' properties from wicked husbands. I suppose the old story, and that the laws are only made for the strong, not for the weak. I wonder too why this misfortune did not happen to Mrs. Boffin. Perhaps her husband is sober, and she has no savings to lose.'

Then returning to her own troubles, she said out loud:

'I wonder if Mr. Fortescue will see my advertisement, he will understand it. I hope no one else except Mr. Vernon really is the same as Mr. Fortescue, will see it. I should be sorry to get them into any unpleasantness for my sake. I wonder if Mr. Fortescue will ever marry; I am sure he ought, he is so kind and generous. He remembers the dead too, and poor people. Yes, he and Mr. Vernon have been raised up by Providence to help us in our necessity, and heaven will remember and reward them both, I am sure. How wicked it is to say there is no heaven. What would earth be to the poor and needy if there were no heaven to look up to? I do hope I shall soon go out as a governess, then I will save all my money, and support mother and Mary. There is no fear of my putting it into a bank, like poor Mrs. Nicholson. I wonder if I shall ever have a husband to run with it. But I forget, governesses have no husbands. They are all males and females all in one. But I should so like to do something for myself, and sometimes I do really think I should like to be a man. It's so easy for men! Why, when they walk about the streets, no one stares at them, as they do at women, as if they were savages. Yes; I am not at all sure that I would like to be a man. Dear me, I'm so tired and so sleepy, I'll go up to bed and see if mother is comfortable, and then I'll go up to the nursery where Mary is, and go to bed.'

In a very little time after this long soliloquy, Edith Priestley fast asleep by Mary's side, and her dreams, if she was not to have any, were those of a brave and noble-hearted woman.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WALKING PARTY AT HIGH BEECH.

THAT walking party at High Beech might have been described as a performance, as the playbills say, by the whole strength of the company. Lord and Lady Pennyroyal went, and Sir Thomas and Lady Carlton, and Count Pantouffles and Lady Sweetapple, and the Barkers and the Marjorams, and Mr. Sonderling, and Har-

Edward, and Florry and Alice. It had been remarked by Mr. Beeswing, that the only thing which ever moderated the rancour of Mrs. Marjoram was the presence of Lord Pennyroyal. She seemed to think that it was wrong to revile her husband before the face of his cousin the peer. 'If I were Marjoram,' said Mr. Beeswing to Count Pantouffles, 'I would always stay at Farthinghoe Castle or Rosemary Manor, for then I should have rest from trouble.'

'It is very good to say stay,' said Count Pantouffles, 'but it is not so easy to stay with Lord Pennyroyal. Twice he has asked me, and twice he has put me off because he had a pitiute, what you call a cold.'

So they went along over the chase, under the trees, now walking, now resting. Colonel Barker and his wife went arm-in-arm: 'It is so nice to walk with you, Jerry, over this springy turf.'

'The pleasure is quite as great to me, dear,' returned the gallant Colonel.

'Mr. Sonderling,' said Florry, 'I want you to tell me the end of that story; that one, I mean, which you began before luncheon.'

'I do not remember no story,' said Mr. Sonderling, mindful of his oath.

'Let me have no stories,' said Florry, 'but come and tell me all you know about the demon.'

'I dare not,' said Mr. Sonderling; 'I would not tell you for anything.'

'How silly you are!' said Florry; 'you never know your own mind.'

'Mr. Fortescue,' said Lady Sweetapple, 'do you still persist in defying me? Do you still stick to your Price?'

'I will never tell you,' said Harry, 'and I still defy you. I am ready to talk with you on any subject but that.'

'Just like a man!' said Amicia—'always ready to talk on any subject but that which interests a woman more than any other.' Then in a threatening voice, 'Mr. Fortescue, I insist on knowing everything about Miss Price!'

'You may insist as long as you like,' said Harry, 'but my lips shall never tell you anything about that young lady.'

'Then she is a young lady,' said Amicia eagerly; 'the dark young lady in the background of whom the gipsy spoke.'

'I say nothing about "a dark young lady," or a background,' said Harry fiercely, 'but I will never speak to you about Miss Price.'

'I have nearly learned all I wished to know,' said Amicia bitterly.

'You fancy you know a great deal, but you know really nothing,' said Harry.

'We shall see,' said Amicia. 'Perhaps I know more about her than you think.'

'You can know no harm of her,' said Harry.

'That depends,' said Amicia tauntingly.

All this was said while they were walking apart, and while Florry was trying to coax Mr. Sonderling into telling her of his early relations with 'Miss Smeess.' All the while Amicia kept her eye on her old admirer, and every now and then threw him a look which said as much as, 'There's a good boy.' Florry, on her side, looked hard enough and long enough at Harry; but he was so engaged in maintaining his position and defending Edith Price, that even Florry's looks were lost on him.

Then shortly a gathering together of the company into closer quarters, as they dived down into a narrow dell, hindered all familiar intercourse, and the conversation became more general.

'I should think there were truffles under these beeches in autumn,' said Mr. Beeswing to Count Pantouffles.

'Truffles!' said the Count, as if his heart were really touched. 'Truffles! how delicious! Do you track your truffles with dogs, as they do in Perigord, or with pigs, as in Poitou, Sir Thomas?'

'I never hunt them at all. I have often heard that there must be truffles here, but I don't care for them well enough to look for them.'

'Not care for truffles!' said the Count; 'why, they are the de-lightfulest things in the world. *Dindon aux truffes*, or *truffes farcis à la vin de Madère*, *O mon Dieu!*'

And then the Count went off into an ecstasy of gluttony, and took off his hat and bowed to an imaginary goddess of truffles—a sylvan divinity, having her fane under wide-spreading beeches.

'What do you think of gluttony and drunkenness now, my dear?' said Mr. Marjoram to his wife, as he heard this rhapsody of the gastronomic Count.

'I think them very disgusting, and I shall make you read that Homily again as soon as we get back to the house.'

Here Mr. Marjoram fell to the rear, and was heard to utter the words, 'O Lord!' as he left his wife's side.

Then, as they scattered again, Edward and Alice were left to themselves. They were the last to descend into that charming beechen dell, and the last to emerge from it. They say the course of true love never runs smooth, but theirs had run smoothly enough during these three days. This was what they had got to as they stood alone for a minute, under the brow of the dell:

'And do you love me very, very much?' said Alice.

'Very, very much indeed,' said Edward; 'more than anything or any one in the world beside.'

'Won't Harry be jealous of me for taking you away from him?' said Alice.

'Why should he?' said Edward.

'Perhaps I might be jealous of him,' said Alice. 'I am sure I shall if he comes between us.'

'He will not, dearest,' said Edw

so they passed out

he dell into the sunshine, and made haste to overtake the others under a huge oak.

'Come here, Alice,' cried Florry, 'I want you so much. Where have you been?'

'Not very far off,' said Alice, blushing, 'but always behind, so that you could not see us, though we were quite close to you; weren't we, Mr. Vernon?'

'O, yes,' said Edward, 'we were quite close to you; and though we could not see us, we saw all you did.'

'Then you saw me on a wild-geese chase,' said Florry, 'or rather on a tame-geese chase; for I was trying to get something out of that idiotic German, and, try what I would, I utterly failed.'

'What was it you wanted to know?' asked Edward, chiefly intent at concealing the confusion of Alice.

'O,' said Florry, 'I wanted him to tell me all he knew about that odious woman. I mean, all he knew about her when she was called "Smeess," as he calls her, at the College of the Deaf and Dumb. But though he was on the point of telling me before luncheon, we have not been able to get a word out of him since she carried him off into the conservatory, and fascinated him there and then.'

As she said this the three were standing apart from the rest, still under the shade of the mighty tree, which was a worthy rival of King Edward's Oak. Whether Edward thought that for the present he had gone far enough with Alice, we cannot say; but he left her side and joined the knot of men who stood round Lord Inyroyal, as he was discoursing on the necessity of landlords invariably having wealthy tenants. To hear him speak, one would think the outgoings of his property left him no margin at all to live.

What with drainage, and repairs, and remissions of rent in bad seasons, and bad debts every year, he really could scarcely make his ends meet. He was not sure, next season, that he should not have to live altogether in one wing of Rosemary Manor.

'It is these double establishments and treble households that ruin a man,' he said. 'If I did not save by many minor economies, I really should be obliged to take the benefit of the Bankruptcy Act, and in fact, I see that several peers of the realm have been forced to do.'

'What a good thing all this will be some of these days for Rosemary!' said Mr. Beeswing to Sir Thomas. 'The only fear is, that when he gets his innings he may make the money fly faster than it is now.'

'It will take a deal to ruin the Rosemary property,' said Sir Thomas. 'This man, who says he can't make both ends meet, and, besides his own immense estates, all in the highest state of cultivation, and without a shilling of debt, mortgages at his bankers' landed estates in half the counties in England. In all prob-

ability Lord Pennyroyal is at this moment, as he stands there that oak *in forma pauperis*, the very richest man in all England.

'Verily,' said Count Pantouffles, 'I should not have thought by his clothes or his hat. You make me much astonished.'

By this time most of the ladies voted they had had enough of it. It was one of those June afternoons when a little walking is a very great way. It was proposed, therefore, that the ladies should return to the Hall, with any gentlemen who wished to go with them, while the rest went on with Sir Thomas and Lord Pennyroyal to inspect a field of sugar-beet, which had been planted as an experiment.

'I do not care for the betteraves,' said Count Pantouffles, 'I will go back with you;' and so saying, he made one of his very bows to Lady Carlton.

'We shall be very much obliged to you for your escort. Who else will go back with us?'

'I too,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'have weariness. As for the sugar-beet, I have often made his acquaintance in Schlesien and other places in Germany. By your leave, my lady, I will go with you.'

'We shall be delighted, I am sure,' said Lady Carlton, 'who else is coming?'

'May I?' said Edward, 'I am so tired.' And as he said this he resumed guard at the side of Alice.

'Three come with us then,' said Lady Carlton, 'and then I will go with Sir Thomas. Right about face, ladies,' she said, and they all faced about, and walked slowly back to the Hall, through the heather and fern.

On the way back, Count Pantouffles devoted himself to Lord Pennyroyal, for whom his respect had much increased after Sir Thomas had made that emphatic declaration as to Lord Pennyroyal's wealth. What he said or did does not much matter; but doubt he returned to the Hall quite as satisfied with himself as he had been when he left it; and as for Lady Pennyroyal, she was keen a judge of character not to make his exquisite coxcomb transparent emptiness a special study.

Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Marjoram clung together and conversed. The first hoped that Colonel Barker would not overheat himself in the hot sun, and the other regretted that, on the whole, the conversation at High Beech was so unprofitable in a general point of view. 'If it were not for those morning prayers,' she said, 'High Beech would be little better than a heathen house.'

Edward Vernon, of course, the sly fellow! stayed with the ladies, not so much because he was tired, as because he wished to be at the side of Alice. But on this occasion he was mistaken, whether it were that Lady Carlton thought he had paid

enough attention to her daughter, and had remarked how they had lingered behind in the dell, certain it is that she called Edward Vernon to her, and made him walk by her side all the way to the Hall. Of course he fretted and fumed, and champed and chewed, but he could not help it; and the end was, he had not one single word with Alice all the way back. Several times he caught himself saying, 'What a fool I was not to go and see the sugar-beet! At any rate, then I should have been with Harry, and heard what he had to say.'

It so happened, therefore, that the two sisters and their natural enemy, as Florry called her, were left to walk home together, and then it was that Lady Sweetapple thought she would make another *grand coup*. She was sure of Mr. Sonderling, and, with a few words in German, sent him off to attend on Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Marjoram, and with them he walked as long as there was any walking to be done.

Having dispatched him, Lady Sweetapple went up to Florry and Alice, who as usual were discussing her, and said:

'I am so glad, dear Miss Carltons,—for I speak to both of you,—to be able to say something that has been on my mind some time, and which I must beg you both to consider as strictly private and confidential. Will you promise me not to breathe a word of what I am going to tell you to any other human being?'

'What shall we say, Florry?' said Alice, in great alarm, for she thought something dreadful was coming out about Edward Vernon.

'I sha'n't make any promise till I hear what it is,' said Florry, very illogically and not very graciously.

'Then, my dear Miss Carlton,' said Amicia, 'I sha'n't say it at all. I can assure you it will be your own loss.'

This was too tantalising even for Florry's good resolutions.

'I think I should like to hear it,' she said, 'only perhaps it isn't a secret at all.'

'I am quite willing to agree to these terms,' said Amicia very sweetly. 'If what I tell you is no secret, I will give you both leave to tell it as soon as you hear it.'

'Nothing can be fairer than that,' said Alice.

'Why, you goose!' said Florry. 'If we know it already, and it's no secret, of course we can talk about it—even Lady Sweetapple can't prevent that. She can't cut out our tongues;' and as she said this, she gave Amicia a look as if she would very much have liked to cut her tongue out.

'Will you hear what I have to say?' said Amicia, with the most provoking indifference both to Florry's looks and words.

'Yes,' said Florry.

'What I wish to say is something which may concern you, Miss Carlton; but at any rate it is of moment to all Mr. Fortescue's

friends, of whom I think I am not wrong in believing you to be one.'

'Indeed!' said Florry.

'Mr. Fortescue!' said Alice, rather relieved to think that Lady Sweetapple was not going to say anything about Edward Vernon.

'You may not be aware, Miss Carlton,' said Amicia, 'that Mr. Fortescue is paying attention to another young lady.'

'I don't believe it,' said Florry, 'if you mean by "attention" that he is in love or engaged to any young lady. I have seen him pay attention to many people, who certainly do not deserve that he should think of them for a moment.'

'Quite true,' said Amicia, not caring to notice the sting again herself conveyed in Florry's words, 'and it is just because I have reason to think that this young lady is not worthy of Mr. Fortescue to notice that I speak to you now, in all friendliness, in the way of warning.'

'Why of warning?' asked Florry.

'Because, my dear Miss Carlton, if a young man is proved to be entangled with people beneath him in position and in other respects he is no longer a fit object for the consideration of those of his own rank.'

'I don't understand you,' said Alice.

'Perhaps not, my dear,' said Amicia. 'It is just as well you should not entirely understand me; but if you both understand enough to be warned against young men whose conduct does not entitle them to respect, I shall have gained my purpose.'

'What is the name of this young lady who is so much beloved by Mr. Fortescue in position, and with whom he is supposed to be in some way or other entangled?' asked Florry.

'I can tell you even that,' said Amicia, 'and my being able to do so is the best proof I can give you that I have not spoken lightly on this very serious subject. Her name is Price.'

'Nothing else but Price?' asked Florry. 'Even persons of inferior social position must have Christian names.'

'Edith,' said Amicia slowly, 'Edith Price.'

'Where does she live?'

'In London, at No. — Lupus-street, Pimlico,' said Amicia.

'Lupus-street? I never heard of such a street,' said Florry.

'Your never having heard of it, my dear Miss Carlton, is no proof that it does not exist. You never heard of Miss Edith Price, but there is, unfortunately, no doubt of her existence. As little doubt is there that she lives at No. — Lupus-street, and that Mr. Fortescue corresponds with her.'

'How do you know that?' asked Florry fiercely, who for the first time began to think the matter serious.

'I am not at liberty to tell you as much as that,' said Lady

Sweetapple, 'but you may rely on what I say to be the truth. Mr. Fortescue corresponds with Miss Edith Price at No. — Lupus-street.'

'And if he does?' said the ingenuous Alice. 'If he does, what harm is there in that?'

'I daresay she's some begging-letter impostor,' said Florry, 'that Harry—I mean Mr. Fortescue—has written to once in answer to one of her applications, and out of that one letter all this "fuss" has arisen.'

'Well,' said Amicia, 'fuss or not, the fact is as I say: letters pass between Mr. Fortescue and Miss Edith Price, and I have every reason to believe that the relations which exist between them are not those which are commonly found between begging impostors and their victims.'

'Depend upon it,' said Florry, rather to herself than to the rest of the trio, 'Mr. Fortescue is not the man to do anything mean or underhand, and so I am sure all this mystification about Miss Edith Price will be cleared up.'

'I sincerely hope so, with all my heart,' said Amicia demurely. 'But I own I am not so sure in my own mind that this affair is capable of a satisfactory explanation.'

'I quite agree with my sister,' said Alice. 'I am sure Mr. Vernon would never be bosom friends with a man who did anything disgraceful.'

'We shall see, all of us, some day,' said Amicia oracularly.

'Yes,' said Florry, 'I suppose we shall; and then we shall see that all this scandal about Mr. Fortescue is mere invention.'

'Invention or not,' said Lady Sweetapple, 'both of you young ladies must consider what I have said as strictly private and confidential, and on no account breathe a word of this sad subject to any human being. Remember, I hold you both to your promise. You cannot say that what I have told you is no secret.'

By this time they were near the Hall; and the three, who had lagged behind, walked the rest of the way in silence, musing as they went. It must be admitted that Amicia had played her stroke very cleverly. All she wanted was time. If she could carry Harry Fortescue away to Ascot, before he had made any declaration of his intentions to Florry, she thought she would be safe. She had confidence in herself, when she had a fair field and no favour. She thought the best, and in fact the only way, was to throw a coldness between the two, and this would be brought about by telling Florry the story about Edith Price, and yet forbidding her to mention it. You will say she was a very wicked woman; but you must remember, all of you, that Amicia was quite in the dark as to the relations between Edith Price and Harry Fortescue. Even you as yet scarce know what they precisely were, but she was as ignorant of them as either Florry or Alice. All she knew was, that Mr. Beeswing's

valet had said that Mr. Fortescue was engaged to, or in love with Miss Edith Price, and that Harry had written that unhappy letter, the destruction of which had caused such trouble to poor Edith, and had also led to the loss of Mrs. Nicholson's 'bank.' She was not, therefore, so very inexcusable, though no doubt her main object in speaking as she did was, if possible, to carry off Mr. Fortescue for herself. If she could once get him alone and away from High Beech, she was quite ready to snap her fingers at Miss Edith Price, and to let her do her worst. Amicia therefore thought she was quite justified in what she did, and she was also—what indeed some ladies think much more important than justification—she was quite satisfied with herself.

It cannot be said that Florry Carlton was quite so satisfied—she never would believe anything wrong about Harry, 'her own Harry,' as she called him in her heart; but still she could not help wishing that this nasty story about Miss Edith Price had never been told her.

'And she seems to know it all, chapter and verse;' that was another of the thoughts that passed through her mind. 'I wonder how she heard it.' So Florry went on musing as she walked.

Alice Carlton was not quite so satisfied as Amicia, but she was not in the same perplexity as poor Florry. She sympathised with everything that touched her sister, and as she knew Florry was very fond of Harry, she felt for her when Lady Sweetapple was poisoning their ears with her insinuations against Harry's character. But after all, in all the selfishness of her love for Edward Vernon, 'the great thing,' she said to herself, 'is that no one can say a word against Edward. His character is above all suspicion.' She had just arrived at this comfortable conclusion as they entered the Hall.

'Any letters for any one by the second post?' said Florry.

This brought them to the table, where the post-office or china dish lay; for in that dish, as you know, the letters for the post were put, and by its side, on the table; the letters that came by the second post were laid.

'No letters for any one,' said Alice, 'except mamma, papa, and Lord Pennyroyal. They always have letters.'

Then she glanced at the letters in the dish, and there she saw a letter, in Edward Vernon's handwriting, addressed to 'Miss Edith Price, No. — Lupus-street, Pimlico, London, S.W.'

'What is it, dear?' said Florry, as Alice clutched her and gave a start, which also attracted the attention of Lady Sweetapple. So they all three looked at the dish at once, and saw the fatal address.

'Miss Edith Price, No. — Lupus-street, Pimlico. Just as I told you, my dears,' said Lady Sweetapple. 'Only it seems that Miss Edith Price is even more dangerous than I thought her. She is a young lady, it seems, who corresponds with two young gentlemen at once.'

BELGRAVIA

MAY 1872

TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XV. 'DOST THOU LOOK BACK ON WHAT HATH BEEN?'

AFTER Hubert Walgrave's departure, the entire story of Grace Redmayne's life could be told in three words: 'He was gone.' She abandoned herself utterly to the bitterness of regret. She went to and fro by day, and lay down to rest at night, with one great sorrow in her heart—a childish grief perhaps at the worst, but none the less bitter to this childish soul. Nor had she any friendly ear into which to pour her woes. On the contrary, she had to keep perpetual watch and ward over herself, lest she should betray her foolish secret. It was the old story of the worm in the bud, and the damask cheek soon began to grow wan and pale. So changed and haggard, indeed—so faded from her nymph-like beauty did the girl become, that even Mrs. James Redmayne's unsentimental eyes perceived the difference; and that worthy matron told her husband, with some anxiety of tone, that their niece must be ill.

'She's going the way of her poor mother, I'm afraid, Jim,' she said. 'She's fainted dead off more than once since that evening in Clevedon Chase. I let her do a hand's turn in the dairy the day before yesterday; for she gets restless and fretful sometimes, for want of work—lolloping about all day, reading novels or playing the piano. It was light work enough—making up a bit of butter into wans—for it isn't likely I'd give her anything heavy to do; but when she'd been standing in the dairy half an hour or so, she went off all of a sudden as white as a sheet of paper, and would have gone flat down on the bricks, if I hadn't caught her in my arms; and a regular bother I had to bring her round too. Depend upon it, Mr. Humphreys was right, and there's something wrong with her heart.'

'Poor little lass!' murmured the farmer tenderly. He remem-

bered his niece when she had been indeed a little lass, and had sat upon his knee peering into the mysteries of a turnip-shaped silver watch—a fragile flower-like child, whom he used to touch tenderly with his big clumsy hands, as if she had been an exotic. 'Poor little lass! that seems hard though, Hannah, if there's anything amiss. She's so young, and so bright, and so pretty—as personable a young woman as you can see between this and Tunbridge. And there's her father working for her over yonder. I think it would clean break Rick's heart if he were to come back and find Gracey missing. We'd best do something, hadn't we, Hannah—take her up to some London doctor, eh?'

'We might do that,' Mrs. Redmayne answered thoughtfully, 'when the hops are gathered. I couldn't spare a day between this and then, if it was a matter of life and death, as you may say; and thank God it isn't that! The girl ain't strong, and she's subject to fainting-fits; but there mayn't be anything serious in it, after all.'

'You must take her up to London, Hannah, to see some top sawyer of a doctor, as soon as ever the hopping's over.'

'I don't mind doing that. It's no use fidgeting ourselves with Mr. Humphreys' fancies. If you've got a sick headache, he looks at you as solemn as if he was thinking of giving a hint to the undertaker.'

'I say, mother,' Mr. James Redmayne remarked to his spouse after a pause, 'you don't think the girl's got anything on her mind do you? She ain't fretting about anything, is she?'

'Fretting about anything! Mercy's sakes, what's she got to fret about?' All her victuals found for her, and no need to soil the tips of her fingers, unless she likes. She's never known a trouble in her life, except her father leaving her; and she's got the better of that ever so long. What can put such rubbish into your head, father?'

'Well, I don't know; girls are apt to have fancies, you see. There was that chap Mr. Walgry, for instance, hanging about her and talking to her a good deal, off and on. He may have put some foolish notions into her head—may have flattered her a bit perhaps and made her think he was in love with her.'

Mr. Redmayne made these observations in a dubious tone, and with a somewhat guilty feeling about his own conduct during the one week of his wife's absence. He had left those two so entirely free to follow their own devices, while he made the most of his brief span of liberty. The partner of his fortunes took him sharply.

'Hanging about her, indeed!' she exclaimed. 'I never allow any hanging about to go on under my nose; and I must say I always found Mr. Walgry quite the gentleman. Of course he did talk

~~some~~ notice of Grace; she is a pretty girl, and it isn't likely she'd be passed over like a plain one. But I don't believe he ever said a foolish word to her, or behaved any way unbecoming a gentleman.'

'If you say so, Hannah, I make no doubt you're quite correct in your views,' the farmer replied submissively; 'only I don't like to see Gracey hanging her head—it don't seem natural.'

'It's weakness, that's what it is, James. If she'd only drink the hop-tea I make her, she'd pick up her strength fast enough. There's nothing finer than a tumbler of hop-tea every morning; but girls are so obstinate, and think that physic ought to be as sweet as sugar-plums.'

So the discussion ended. Grace's health seemed variable. She looked brighter on some days than on others; made little efforts, in fact, to stifle her sorrow; put on an appearance of life and gaiety; and then relapsed and gave way altogether. When questioned by her aunt or uncle, she said she had a headache—they could never extort more from her than that. Once good-natured James Redmayne took her aside, and asked her, with simple earnestness that touched her keenly, if there were any trouble on her mind; but she answered him very much as her aunt had done on her behalf: What *could* there be to trouble her?

'You are all so kind to me, dear uncle James,' she said; 'and if my father were only at home, I ought to be as happy as any girl in Kent.'

It was rather a vague answer, but to James Redmayne it seemed a sufficient one. He went in to his wife with an air of mingled wisdom and triumph.

'I've got to the bottom of it all, mother,' he said. 'Gracey's still fretting for her father; she owned as much to me just now.'

'More fool she, then!' exclaimed Mrs. James, who did not approve of confidence being reposed in her husband which had not first been offered to her. 'Fretting won't bring Richard home a day the sooner, or earn him an ounce of gold-dust to bring back with him. She'd better drink my hop-tea, and keep up her health and good looks, so as to do him credit when he does come.'

Mr. Walgrave had been gone three weeks—ah, what an age of sadness and regret!—when the parcel containing the locket came to Grace. A parcel directed in his hand—it was only too familiar to her from pencil-notes in some of the books he had lent her, and from the papers she had seen scattered about his table. Fortune favoured her in the receipt of the packet. She had gone out to take the letters from the postman that morning, expecting nothing, hoping for nothing. From *him* or of *him* she never thought to receive sign or token. Had he not told her many times, in the plainest words, that the story of their love must come to an end, like a book

that is shut, on the day he left Brierwood? She was too simple-minded to imagine him capable of wavering. He had said that his honour compelled him to forsake her, and he would be faithful to that necessity.

Her heart gave a great leap when she saw the address on the little packet. She fled round the house like a lapwing, and did not stop to breathe till she was safe under the shadow of the cedar, in the spot where she had known such perilous happiness with him. Then she sank down on the rustic bench, and with tremulous fingers tore open the little parcel.

A dainty case of dark-blue velvet, in itself a treasure to a girl so unsophisticated as Grace; a casket that opened with a spring, revealing a large yellow gold locket set with pearls, reposing on a bed of white satin—a gem so beautiful that the sight of it took her breath away, and she sat gazing upon it, transfixed with womanly rapture.

She opened the locket, and looked at the little enamelled picture of forget-me-nots. Sweet, very sweet; but O, how much she would have preferred his portrait, or even one little ring of his dark wavy hair! She laid the treasure on the bench beside her, and opened his letter, devouring it with wide-open luminous eyes.

The scrap of paper attracted her attention first: 'There is a secret spring; touch it, and you will find my photograph.' She gave a little cry of joy, and began to search for the spring, found it, and gave a louder cry of utter delight when she beheld the face of her lover. The skilful colourist had flattered Mr. Walgrave not a little: the pale dark complexion was Italianised; the gray eyes were painted in ultramarine; the face in the miniature looked from five to ten years younger than the original. But to Grace the picture was simply perfect. She perceived no flattery; the face, which was to her the noblest upon earth, was only idealised as she had idealised it in her own mind from the hour in which she began to love its owner. And yet, when Hubert Walgrave first came to Brierwood, she had seen nothing wonderful in his appearance, and had considered him decidedly middle-aged.

At last, after gazing at the miniature till her eyes grew dim, clouded with innocent tears—after kissing the glass that covered it with fond foolish kisses—she touched the spring and shut the case, and then read her letter.

This disappointed her a little. It was evidently written to be read by her uncle and aunt. Not one word of that brief bright past; only a letter such as any grateful lodger might have written to his landlady's daughter. She shed a few tears.

'It was good of him to send me his picture,' she said to herself. 'But he is quite gone from me; I shall never, never see him again!'

The picture had kindled new hope in her breast; the letter de-
yed it. There was some comfort, however, in being able to show
letter to her aunt, and to wear her locket in the light of day.
carried the little velvet case and the letter indoors, and went
nest of her aunt, whom she found in the dairy.

'O, aunty Hannah, I have had a letter and a present!'

'What, a pincushion or a bookmark from one of your old
solfellows, I'll lay, or some such trumpery? You girls are al-
s fiddle-faddling about some such rubbish!'

'Look, aunt!' cried Grace, displaying the locket imbedded in
te satin.

'Sure to goodness!' cried Mrs. James, staring at the trinket,
ere did you get that?'

'From Mr. Walgrave, aunt, with such a kind letter!'

Mrs. James snatched the letter from her niece's hand, and read
loud, going over every word, and harking back every now and
to read a sentence a second time, in a deliberate way that aggra-
d Grace beyond measure. And then she turned from the letter
he locket, and examined it minutely, while Grace stood by in
gony, lest her clumsy fingers should hit upon the secret spring.

'It's a pretty thing enough,' she said at last, 'and must have
a sight of money—pearls and all, for I suppose they're real;
I can't see as he had any call to send you such a thing. He
for what he had, and there was no obligation on either side.
get-me-nots too, as if it was for a young woman he was keeping
pany with. I don't half like such nonsense, and I doubt your
e will be for sending it back.'

'O, aunt!' said Grace; and then began to cry.

'Lord bless me, child, don't be such a cry-baby. If you can
round your uncle to let you keep the locket, you may. A pre-
s's a present, and I don't suppose Mr. Walgry meant any harm;
too much a gentleman for that, leastways as far as I could see.
I hope is, he never went talking any nonsense to you behind
back.'

'No, aunt, he never talked nonsense; he was always sensible,
he told me—something about himself. He's engaged to be
ried—has been engaged for ever so long.'

'Well, it was fair and honourable of him to tell you that, any-
. You can show the letter to your uncle at dinner-time; and
e likes you to keep the locket, I'm agreeable.'

When dinner-time came, Mr. James, whose opinion upon most
ects was a mere reflection of his wife's, studied that worthy
an's countenance; and seeing her favourably disposed towards
gift and the giver, opined that his niece might accept Mr. Wal-
re's present without any derogation to the family dignity. She
st write him a pretty little letter of thanks, of course, showing

off her boarding-school education, which Mr. Wort would no doubt forward to him, as he had happened to omit any address in his letter.

So Grace wore her locket in the face of mankind, on the first Sunday after the arrival of the packet; wore it on her muslin dress at church, with a shy consciousness that all the parish must be dazzled by its splendour—that the old rector himself, if his eyes were good enough, might break down in the midst of his sermon, overcome by a sudden glimpse of its gorgeousness. She wore it on a black ribbon under her dress secretly upon those days which her aunt called ‘workadays;’ and at night she put it under her pillow. Hers was the early, passionate, girlish love, which is so near akin to foolishness; the Juliet love, which would have her Romeo cut out in little stars,

‘And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish day.’

The girl’s spirits revived a little with the possession of this locket. She looked brighter and better, and her aunt forgot her fears. September came to an end, and the hop-picking began; herds of tramps from the wilds of Hibernia, from the heart of the Seven-dials, from the wretchedest alleys in Whitechapel and Bermondsey, came pouring in upon the fair Kentish country. Mrs. Redmayne was too busy to think much of Grace’s health; and when the girl began to flag a little again, finding that life was dreary even with that portrait in her bosom, no one observed the change. She went off into rather a severe fainting-fit one afternoon; but there was no one at hand but Sally, the maid-of-all-work, who brought her round as best she might, and thought nothing of the business. She had fainted herself on a midsummer Sunday, when Kingsbury church was hotter than usual, and never went to that place of worship without a big blue bottle of smelling-salts.

Now in the dusky October evenings fitful patches of light glowed here and there on the landscape; and riding along narrow lanes, the traveller came ever and anon to a rustic encampment—a ragged family huddled round a fire, sunburnt faces turned towards him inquiringly as he passed, a bevy of tatterdemalion children darting out at him to ask for alms, and sharp cries of ‘Pitch us a copper, sir!’ in the purest Cockney. The group, so picturesque at a distance, was sordid enough on inspection, and the traveller could but wish these nomads had better shelter. A ragged blanket perhaps, hung upon a couple of poles, made a rough tent here and there; but those who possessed so much luxury were the aristocrats of the community; the vulgar herd slept in the open, save on some lucky occasion, when a liberal farmer gave them the use of an empty barn.

James Redmayne was tender-hearted, and at Brierwood the wandering race fared luxuriously. He lent them old rick-covers for

ats, and whatever barn he had empty was placed at their disposal. Grace took an interest in the little children, spent all her money in cakes, and robbed the baskets in the apple-loft for their benefit; carried the women great jugs of cold tea in the evenings, and helped and comforted them in many small ways, at the hazard of catching a fever, as her aunt frequently reminded her. In this particular season she was more than usually active in these small charities: that great sorrow in her heart was numbed a little by the sight of commoner sorrows. This year she was more tender than ever, the women thought—the old hands, who had known her in former years. She would sit for hours in a shady corner of a field, with a sick child in her arms, singing it to sleep with sweet sad songs. The women used to look at her from a little distance, and talk together in whispers of her gentleness and her pale grave face.

'I'm afeard there's summat wrong,' one stalwart matron said to another. 'She were as gay as a bird last hop-picking. She looks like my sister Mary, that went off into a consumption and died in the hospital—that white-like, and her hands that wasted as you might a'most see through 'em. And she such a sweet young thing, too! It do seem hard, that such as she should be took, and my old father, wot's a trouble to everybody, and no more use of his limbs than a new-born infant, left behind to worrit.'

One night, after a day spent almost entirely in the hop-fields, Grace discovered a great calamity—her locket was gone. The ribbon worn every day had been worn through at last by the sharp edge of the ring. It was round her neck when she undressed, with the two ends hanging loosely. Late as it was, she would have gone out and hunted for her treasure by moonlight—would have roused the hop-pickers, and bribed them to hunt for her; but the house was locked, and the keys under Mrs. James's pillow, and it was more than she dared to wake that vigilant housewife. So she went to bed quietly, and cried all night, and came downstairs next morning ashy pale, and with red swollen circles round her eyes, to tell of her loss.

Mrs. James flew into a passion on hearing the news.

'Lost it! you ought to be ashamed of yourself. What call had you to wear it on a workaday?' she cried.

Grace blushed crimson.

'I know it was very foolish of me, aunt Hannah; but—but—I was so fond of it!'

'Was there ever such a baby? Fond of it, indeed! You're fond of the piano your father gave you: I'm sure I wonder you don't wear that hanging round your neck—you're silly enough. And of course some of your blessed hop-pickers have stolen it; and serve you right. That comes of consorting with such low rabble.'

'They couldn't have stolen it, aunt; I wore it under my dress; they couldn't have known anything about it.'

'Stuff and nonsense! they're cunning enough to know anything. If you'd swallowed a sovereign, they'd know it was inside you. Besides, I daresay you took and pulled it out of your bosom to show to some of their rubbishing brats. You'll nurse yourself into typhus fever or the smallpox one of these days, with nursing the ragamuffins; and a deal of use *you'll* be in the world without your good looks, considering as you can't so much as set the sponge to a batch of bread.'

Grace was silent with the silence of guilt. Sitting under a hed yesterday with one of those waifs of humanity in her lap, while her mother and a brood of bantlings from three years old upwards clustered round a hop-bin a few yards off, she had drawn the locket from her bosom and dangled it before the eyes of the little one, half to amuse the child, half for the pleasure of looking at the thing which was the sole token left of her brief love-story.

Aunt Hannah, though unsympathetic in manner, was by means minded that the locket should be lost.

'It's a thankless task spending money upon *you*,' she said, 'and so I shall tell Mr. Walgry, if ever I set eyes on him again. Real gold, set with real pearls, and go and fool it away among a pack of hoppers.'

After having given relief to her mind in this manner, she patched Jack and Charley and a farm-labourer to scour the country under Grace's guidance. The girl was to point out to them the path she had taken, and every spot where she had rested through the previous day.

'But it's about as likely you'll find the moon lying in the grass as that locket,' aunt Hannah remarked despairingly as they set out.

She proved only too true a prophet. The young men searched diligently, under Grace's direction—searched till dinner, and at dinner began again, and went on unflinchingly till tea-time; without result. After tea the early twilight shrouded the farm, it was too dark to look any longer. Uncle James had the hop collected at nightfall, and told them what had been lost, offering reward of a couple of sovereigns to the man, woman, or child who would restore it; but they all made the same declaration, with the form of asseveration common to their class. No such thing had been seen.

'That's a lie!' said James Redmayne sturdily. 'Some of you has seen it, and some of you has got it, or made away with it last night. The locket's almost as large as the palm of my hand. You couldn't fail to see it lying anywheres; and my sons have searched over every inch of ground my niece walked upon yesterday. I hard you should take anything as belongs to her, for she's been a good friend to you all.'

'That she *have*, sir!' the women cried with tremendous energy.

and a desperate emphasis on the last word. And then came a confusion of shrill voices, all protesting that the owners thereof would not wrong Miss Redmayne to the extent of a sixpence.

Grace went to her room quite worn out by that weary day—the pacing to and fro, with lessening hope as the hours wore on. It was gone—the one solace that had cheered her life.

‘I shall never see his face any more,’ she said to herself. ‘There is a fate against me.’

CHAPTER XVI.

‘BUT IF THOU MEAN’ST NOT WELL.

AFTER the loss of the locket Grace Redmayne drooped visibly. Good-hearted uncle James did all in his power to recover the lost trinket: put the matter into the hands of the police; had inquiries made amongst London pawnbrokers, and so on; but without avail. Poor Grace wandered about the bare fields where the hop-vines had lately flourished, with her eyes fixed on the ground, like some melancholy spirit haunting the scene of an unhappy life. Aunt Hannah reprimanded her sharply from day to day for such foolishness.

‘If the locket’s lost, it’s lost,’ she said philosophically; ‘and there’s no use in grizzling about it. There’s more lockets in the world than that; and if the balance is on the right side next quarter-day, I daresay your uncle will buy you a new one, perhaps with both our portergrafts, one on each side; and that’ll be worth taking care of as a family keepsake—something to show your children by and by.’

Grace gave a little involuntary shudder. A portrait of aunt Hannah, whom photography made unutterably grim, instead of that splendid face, those godlike eyes!

‘It’s very kind of you to think of that,’ the girl said, half crying; ‘but I should never care to have another locket, please.’

‘O, very well! I suppose you think we couldn’t give you anything as handsome as that; but, for my part, I should have thought you’d have set more store by a keepsake from one of your own family than a stranger’s present.’

‘It isn’t that, aunt. I’ve got your photograph, and uncle’s, in my album, and I’m sure I value them. But I’ll never wear another locket. There’s something unlucky about them.’

The year waned. October came to an end; and for various reasons that visit to the London physician, which James Redmayne and his wife had talked about, had not yet been made. To those who saw Grace every day, the gradual change in her was not so obvious as to cause immediate alarm. Nor were hard-working people like the Redmaynes on the watch for such slight symptoms as awaken terror in those who have sufficient leisure to be anxious.

The girl rose at her usual time; took her place among her kindred at meals; went patiently through the routine of the long dull day, and never uttered a complaint.

She was completely unhappy, nevertheless. She had no companions of her own age, who might have taught her to shake off this foolish sorrow—no innocent gaieties to distract her mind. The slow level life of a farmhouse was about the best possible existence in which to foster a sorrow such as hers.

She had written that epistle which her uncle James had spoiled as 'a pretty little letter'—a very formal composition, supervised by the whole family. James Redmayne would fain have had her begin, 'This comes hoping,' a formula which he had used all his life, and firmly believed in as the essence of polite letter-writing. She had written to thank Mr. Walgrave for his very kind presence, which was indeed very, *very* beautiful, and which she should value very much all her life. There were a great many 'verys' in the letter; and it was written in her best boarding-school hand—with long loops to the *g*'s and *y*'s, after a *spécialité* of Miss Tomlin's—on the thickest and creamiest note-paper to be procured at Tunbridge Wells. Uncle James would have had a view of that polite resort at the top of the first page; but this his niece condemned as vulgar.

'Mr. Walgrave knows Tunbridge Wells, uncle,' she said. 'He can't want a picture of it on a penny sheet of paper—such bad paper, too, as they always print the views on.'

No answer had come to this letter, which indeed needed none; but for a month after she sent it the girl had hoped, faintly, for some acknowledgment. With the dying out of this hope, and the loss of her locket, all was over; there was nothing left her except the blank future, in which that one beloved figure could have no part.

And her father—her father, whose letters had been more hopeful of late, telling of increasing good fortune, hinting even at the possibility of his return before another year was ended, with all the objects of his expedition fully realised; the father whose exile she had lamented so bitterly only a year ago—was he forgotten? No, not forgotten; only deposed to the second place in her heart. She thought of him very often, with a guilty sense of having wronged him by her love for another. But that first love of girlhood is an all-absorbing passion. She had hardly room in her mind for the father's image beside that other. If he could have returned at this moment to cheer and comfort her, she might perhaps have struggled bravely with her grief, and conquered it. He had been all the world to her in years gone by—father, mother, companion, friend; the pride and delight of her life; and in the rapture of reunion with him that other image might have grown pale and shadowy, until it be-

came only the memory of a girlish sorrow. But he did not come, and she went on thinking of Hubert Walgrave.

She had no hope—positively none—of ever seeing his face again. Day after day, in the misty November mornings, she awoke with the same void in her heart. The pain was almost worse than the pain of her awakening in the days that followed her father's departure. That grief had at the worst been brightened by hope: this was quite hopeless.

Her aunt sent her to Kingsbury one fine afternoon in November, on some small errand to the single shop of the village—an errand which was designed rather to rouse the girl from her listlessness, and give her the benefit of a brisk walk, than to supply any positive need of the household.

'Anything's better for her than lolloping over a book,' remarked Mrs. Redmayne, who regarded reading in every shape and form, except the ponderous Henry's Bible on a Sunday afternoon, as more or less a vice.

The walk was through those lanes and by those fields which she had walked so often with him; the way by which they had come together on that first Sunday afternoon, when he joined her in her return from church. How well she remembered it all! The landscape had changed since then, but was hardly less beautiful to the eye of a painter. The shifting shadows on the broad fallow, the tawny gold and crimson, brown and dun colour of the still lingering foliage; the very weeds in the hedge, and the dock-leaves in the ditch, fringed by dewdrops left from the morning mists, which a November sun had not been strong enough to disperse—all were beautiful.

A robin was singing with all its might on one of the bars of a gate Grace had to pass. She lingered for a few minutes to listen to him, watching the joyous bird with sad dreamy eyes.

'I wonder if birds have any sorrows,' she thought; and then opened the gate gently, and went through into the lane.

It was a narrow gully between two tall neglected hedges, where the blackberry-bushes grew high and rank, mixed with hazel and hawthorn, upon steep grassy banks which were bright with primroses in April. At the very entrance of the lane Grace stopped suddenly, with a little cry—stopped and clasped her hands upon her heart, which had a trick of beating furiously when she was agitated.

There was a figure advancing towards her—the tall figure of a man—the image that haunted all her thoughts—Hubert Walgrave. He saw her, evidently, and came on with swifter footsteps to meet her.

She would have behaved with the utmost propriety, no doubt, had he come to the gate at Brierwood, and she been prepared for

his appearance ever so little; but at his coming upon her suddenly like this, all her fortitude left her; she fell upon his breast, sobbing hysterically.

‘My darling! my darling!’

For a few minutes he could hardly say any more than this, trying all the while to soothe and comfort her, as if she had been a frightened child—waiting very patiently until that violent emotion had worn itself out. Then he lifted her face tenderly, and looked at her.

‘Why, Grace,’ he said, with a shocked look, ‘how sadly you are altered!’

‘Am I?’ she asked, smiling faintly. ‘I have not been very happy lately—’

‘Has anything troubled you, my sweet one? has anything been going wrong at Brierwood?’

‘O no, no, it is not that. They are all well, and we have hopeful letters from my dear father. Only—’

‘Only what, Grace?’

‘I am so foolish, so wicked. I could not help being miserable—I thought I should never see you again.’

‘And was that thought enough to make you unhappy, dearest?’

‘Yes.’

‘And to see me again, and to be with me, and to be my own for ever,—would that be happiness?’

The soft eyes looked up at him—O, so tenderly!

‘You know that it would.’

He bent down and kissed her.

‘Then it shall be so, Grace,’ he said softly.

‘But, O, you know it can never, never be! There is the other—the lady you are to marry.’

‘That lady shall not come between me and this faithful heart,’ he answered, holding her in his arms, and looking down at her with a proud happy smile. ‘Were she ten thousand times the woman she is, she should not part us, Grace, seeing that you are true to me, and that I love you with all my strength.’

‘True to you!’ she murmured sadly. ‘I have lived for nothing except to think of you since you went away.’

‘And I have made it the business of my life to forget you, Grace, and have failed dismally. I made a vow never to look upon your face again; but the sweet face has never left me. It has followed me by day and night; and at last, after so many wasted struggles, I come back, just to see you once more—hoping to find you false, Grace; asked in church with some stalwart farmer; so that I might be disenchanted, and go away cured of my folly. Are you false, Grace? Is there any red-cheeked young farmer in the case?’

‘A farmer!’ the girl cried contemptuously. ‘If Sir Francis

Clevedon asked me to be his wife, I should refuse him, for your sake.'

Hubert Walgrave gave a little start.

'Sir Francis Clevedon!' he said. 'What fancy puts that name into your head?'

'It was the name I used to think of oftenest before I saw you,' she answered with a smile. 'I suppose every woman has her hero, and Sir Francis was mine. I have never seen him in my life, you know.'

Mr. Walgrave's face, so bright before with a lover's triumph, had clouded over at the sound of the Clevedon name.

'You have never seen him? I have no ground for jealousy, then, I suppose? I daresay he is a very good-looking fellow; for Fortune rarely measures her gifts when she is in the giving mood. Nothing is too much for her favourites. But we won't waste our talk on him, Gracey; we have sweeter things to think of. My own, my dearest, is it really true that you love me, that this pale changed face has grown wan from sorrow for me?'

'There has been no other reason,' she said shyly.

'And you are my own, Grace, all my own?'

'You know that I am,' she answered, looking up at him with clear candid eyes, that smote him to the heart with their innocence, 'if—if you are willing to sacrifice those prospects you spoke of, and to give up the rich lady.'

'My beloved, there is hardly anything in the world I would not surrender for your sake.'

'And you will marry me?' she asked falteringly, the pale face covered with a burning blush. Even in her little world she had learned enough to know that all love-making, such as this, does not tend towards marriage. Every village has its stories of broken faith, and man's dishonour; and there had been such stories to be told of Kingsbury, even within Grace Redmayne's brief experience.

'I will do all that a man of honour should do, dearest. I will do everything that a man can do to make you happy, if you will only trust me.'

'You know that I cannot help trusting you,' she said; 'I love you so much.'

'Then it cannot be too soon, darling.'

'What?' she asked, with a puzzled look.

'Our union.'

'O no, no; it must not be soon. It is too great a sacrifice for you to make. You might regret afterwards; and it would break my heart to know that I had come between you and the things you value. And then there is my father—dearly as I love you, I could do nothing without his knowledge.'

'What, Grace! is this your boundless love? Am I to be se-

condary to a father? Think how very little old Capulet stood for, when once Juliet was in love with Romeo.'

Grace smiled a little at this appeal. They had read *Romeo and Juliet* together one long summer afternoon in the orchard; and her lover had taught her to appreciate the beauties of the text with a fuller comprehension than she had ever brought to it before.

'But I think Signor Capulet was rather a disagreeable kind of father,' she said. 'Mine is so good.'

'My pet, I have no doubt he is as good a fellow as ever breathed; but he is at the antipodes, and I have a horror of long engagements. Life is not long enough for that kind of delay. Rely upon it, Romeo's and Juliet's was the true philosophy—wooed and won to-night, and wed to-morrow.'

'Remember how fatal their marriage was!'

'*Absit omen*. We will try to resemble them in nothing but the fervour of our love, our utter trustfulness in each other. And now let us talk seriously. Take my arm, dear, and let us walk on a little way. Mild as the afternoon is, you are shivering.'

He drew her shawl closer round her, pressed the little hand under his arm, and walked gently on, looking down at her.

'What a lucky fellow I was to meet you here just now—promiscuous, as my servant says! I took a fly from Tunbridge to Kingsbury, and walked on, meaning to invent some excuse for presenting myself at the farm as I came along. But I need not do that now; it will be wiser on the whole that I should not appear at Brierwood. We can arrange everything, you and I, darling, in half an hour, and carry out our plans afterwards, without arousing any one's suspicion.'

The girl looked at him wonderingly; and then little by little, overcoming her objections one by one as they arose, he unfolded his scheme of their future.

He was prepared to make great sacrifices for her love—he did not define them; but to declare his marriage with her would be to blast his prospects. She would hardly desire that, he was sure.

'O, no, no, no,' she faltered piteously; 'but my father—you will place me right with him?'

'Of course, darling; but your father is a long way off now. There will be time enough to consider that difficulty when he is on his homeward voyage. We need only think of perplexities to be overcome in the present, and those are not many. You must be very secret, darling, very brave, and come away from Brierwood quietly some morning—say this day week. That will give me time for my preparations, and yours need be of the slightest order; for you can bring no more luggage than you can carry in your own hand. I will sleep at Tunbridge on the previous night, and meet you with



Edmund Evans. sc.

Louis Huard, del.

"BUT MY FATHER—YOU WILL PLACE ME RIGHT IN HIS SIGHT?"

a fly at Kingsbury at eight in the morning, in time for the nine-o'clock train to London.'

'To London!' echoed Grace, with a little shiver. 'Are we to be married in London?'

'My dearest, everything is possible in London; there is no place like London for keeping a secret. But don't imagine that I am going to mew you up in a smoky city. I shall find a pretty nest for my bird somewhere in the suburbs, between this and Wednesday.'

The whole scheme seemed fraught with terror to Grace. She loved him—O, so fondly! but even her love could hardly conquer her fear of that dim future. To leave the old familiar home—all the world she knew—and go forth with him an alien from her kin. If the marriage was to be secret, they might believe she had gone away to dishonour; and the thought that she should stand disgraced in the minds of her kindred was more than she could bear.

'I may tell my aunt and uncle that I am going away to be married, may I not?' she asked.

'Yes, darling; I will place no fetter upon you there; but remember, they must know nothing till you are gone. You can leave a letter behind you, telling them that you are going to be married, but not mentioning my name. They shall be enlightened by and by.'

And thus by slow degrees, and with much tender pleading, he won her consent to his plan. She could not contemplate it without a strange terror—that rising early in the dim wintry morning, to creep like a criminal from the home of her childhood. But to be with him for ever and ever, with no more parting! She looked back at the sorrowful months of severance—the dreary, dreary days in which she had mourned him as one dead; and cried, with a sudden gush of tenderness,

'What is there that I would not do for your sake? O yes, yes, I will come!'

'Spoken like my own brave girl! You remember that line I marked in your Tennyson—"Trust me all in all, or not at all"? You shall never repent your confidence, my sweetest. And we shall soon bring the roses back to those poor pale cheeks. Do you know, Gracey, this dull farmhouse life was killing you?'

They parted at last, after settling everything—parted because Grace dared stay no longer, and would have, as it was, a lost hour to account for in the best way she could to her aunt. This was Thursday November the 4th; on Thursday November the 11th Grace was to slip out of the house quietly at seven o'clock, at which hour her uncle would have finished his breakfast, and gone out on his rounds of inspection; and her aunt would be busy in the dairy. She was to slip quietly away, by these very lanes. The distance to Kingsbury was an hour's walk at most; and by the turnstile that

divided the lane from the road that skirted the common she would find her lover with a vehicle, ready to spirit her off. It would be safest for him not to come nearer Brierwood than this, or he would have willingly spared her the lonely walk in the chill winter morning.

Even after her graver objections had been met and conquered, Grace did not yield her consent to this arrangement without some feeble womanly protest upon the subject of wedding-clothes.

'To come away like that!' she said, 'without any luggage, without anything! It seems dreadful. When my old schoolfellow Amy Morris, the doctor's daughter, married, she had three great trunkfuls of clothes. I saw the dresses—O, so many! and she was six months having things made. And then there was her wedding-dress—white silk. What am I to be married in, Hubert?'—her voice trembled a little as she pronounced his Christian name; it was almost the first time she had so addressed him—'What am I to be married in, Hubert, if I come away like that?' she asked shyly.

The question, so innocently spoken, stung him to the quick. It is a hard thing for a man to feel himself a scoundrel, and yet hold firmly to the purpose which he knows is infamous.

'My dear love,' he said, after a scarcely perceptible pause—interval enough for a whisper from his better angel—'do you think I should love you any better for three boxes of clothes, or for the finest wedding-gown a French milliner could make you? Remember that story of patient Grisél I read you one day. It was in her utter lowliness and humility that fair young wife seemed sweetest to her stern husband. I will love you as her knight loved Enid, dear, in a faded silk. Burden yourself with nothing next Thursday morning. It will be my delight and pride to buy you all manner of prettinesses—from ivory-backed brushes for that beautiful hair, to glass slippers like Cinderella's, if you choose; though the commentators tell us, by the way, that the famous slipper was made of ermine, and that the glass shoe, so dear to our childhood, is, like Falstaff's babbling of green fields, only a printer's error.'

He spoke lightly, anxious to conceal feelings that were by no means of the lightest, and won a faint smile from Grace Redmayne, to whom his most trivial remark seemed the very essence of cleverness. She would come. All her doubts and fears and little difficulties resolved themselves into that one question, 'What is there in the world I would not do for your sake?'

It was dusk by the time the business was settled. They had walked on to Kingsbury, where Grace gave her aunt's message to the family grocer, while Mr. Walgrave waited for her outside the shop. This being done, he walked back with her through the lanes and fields till they were very close to Brierwood, talking of the future all the time—that future which was to be a very bright one, accord-

ing to Hubert Walgrave. In sight of the old farmhouse, where lights were gleaming from the lower windows, they parted.

'Only for a week, darling,' he whispered, as he kissed the pale old face.

She did not answer him; and he felt that she was shivering.

'My dearest girl, be brave,' he said cheerily. 'It is not such hard road to happiness after all; and it shall be no fault of mine your future life is not all happiness.'

CHAPTER XVII.

BEYOND HIS REACH.

Nothing happened to prevent Grace Redmayne's elopement; and having once given her promise, she had no thought of breaking it.

Her fate was sealed from that moment in the lane when she said, 'I will come.' Perjury to *him* was a crime she could not contemplate. Yet throughout the intervening week she keenly felt any little kindness, any show of interest or motherly care, from sharp-gued aunt Hannah, and was moved to tears more than once by uncle's rough tenderness.

She was going from them almost for ever, she thought. It was doubly likely that Mr. Walgrave—who was a proud man, she fancied, despite his friendly ways at Brierwood—would allow his wife to associate much with her homely kinsfolk.

'He will not part me from my father,' she said to herself. That would be too cruel. But I don't suppose he will let me see uncle and aunt very often.'

She suffered bitterly during that brief interval—suffered sharp pangs of self-reproach, feeling herself the vilest of deceivers. If time had been longer, she could hardly have borne up against this mental misery, and held to her promise. Perhaps Mr. Walgrave had foreseen this when he made the time so short. She could neither eat nor sleep under this burden of secret care—spent her nights in watching for the morning, her days in a strange unsettled state; wandering about the farm in the chill November weather; slipping in and out of the rooms—touching familiar things absently, wondering when she would see them again. The piano which her father had given her—the dear old piano which she had been so proud of possessing as her very own—would her husband let her have it for that by and by, when they were settled? Not the finest and that Erard or Broadwood ever made could be so precious to her as this clumsy old cottage, by a nameless manufacturer.

Their marriage was to be secret, he had told her; but what did that mean? Secret so far as his world was concerned, she supposed; not secret from hers. He had given her permission to say

what she pleased to her aunt in her farewell letter ; therefore there was no secrecy insisted upon there. And by and by, when their honeymoon was over, he would bring her to Brierwood to see her aunt and uncle, perhaps. She brightened at the thought. How proud she would be to appear before them, leaning on his arm ! how proud they must needs feel to see her married to a gentleman ! and would it not be a pleasant surprise for her father, on his coming home, to find his darling had achieved such high fortune ?

So in a strange flutter of doubt and fear, lightened now and then by brief flashes of hopefulness, the days went by until the cheerless morning which was to see Grace Redmayne's farewell to Brierwood. On the previous night she made no attempt to rest—what rest had she had since that meeting in the lane ?—nay, had she ever known pure and perfect repose after that fatal hour in which she first loved Hubert Walgrave ? She had her small preparations to make, and trifling as these were, in her fluttered and nervous state of mind, they occupied a long time. She packed a carpet-bag with the things which seemed most essential for her to take. She had no elaborate travelling-bag bristling with silver-gilt lids and stoppers, like a small battery of guns, such as Miss Vallory considered indispensable for the briefest journey. Her chief treasures were a huge workbox and desk, inlaid with brass, which had belonged to her mother, and had been esteemed very costly and splendid articles in their time. These she left behind her with a sigh of regret. How many little girlish treasures—shreds of ribbon and morsels of lace, cornelian necklaces and silver bodkins—she had hoarded in the secret recesses of these receptacles ! She fancied she would have made a more dignified entrance into her new life armed with that desk and workbox, nor had she the faintest suspicion that the brass-inlaid mahogany boxes were splendours of a bygone age.

There was her wedding-dress to prepare too, in the quiet hours of that long night, when the rushing and scuffling of mice behind the wainscot seemed awful in the deadly stillness of the house—the dress which, in her perfect innocence and trustfulness, she fondly hoped to wear, standing before God's altar, to be made Hubert Walgrave's wife. It must needs be the same dress in which she travelled, since he had forbidden her to cumber herself with luggage. She laid it out on her bed with dainty care—a turned and somewhat faded silk, which her father had bought her for a birthday present three years ago, and which had never been deposed from its proud position as her 'best' dress—a garment to be worn upon half a dozen fine Sundays in the summer, and at about half a dozen small festive gatherings in the winter. It had been a bright peach colour—a *marve*, Richard Redmayne had called it when new—but had been toned down by midsummer sunshine and long laying-up in lavender. She had sewn her choicest pieces of thread-lace—hair-

looms and yellow with age—on the neck and sleeves, and she had taken out a little white crape shawl of her mother's to wear over her shoulders. This, with her summer bonnet, trimmed with a new white ribbon, which she had bought by stealth, would not be so bad, she thought. A large shepherd's-plaid shawl would cover this festive attire during the journey, and a black veil would subdue the brightness of the new ribbon on her bonnet. She was pleased to think that she had planned everything so well.

She had her letter to write after this, and that labour was not an easy one. She knew nothing of where she was going, or at what church she was to be married; or whether it was to be on the day of her flight or the next day. After many ineffectual attempts, she wrote briefly:

'Dearest aunt Hannah,—Pray do not be angry, or let uncle James be angry with me. I am going away to be married to a gentleman. We are to be married in London; but as our marriage is to be kept quite secret for the present, I cannot tell you any more yet awhile—I dare not even tell you his name. I shall write to my father by the next mail, to beg his forgiveness for having taken this step without waiting for his consent. God bless you, dearest aunt, and all at Brierwood! Forgive me for my many faults and shortcomings in the past, and believe me to be ever and ever your grateful and affectionate niece,

GRACE REDMAYNE.'

She dressed herself by candle-light, a little while after the ancient eight-day clock on the stairs had struck five. O, what a sweet face that was which the old-fashioned looking-glass reflected! what a pale wild-rose-like beauty, and how little of earth there was in it! The next morning, at the same hour, there was to be a change upon the fair girlish face, and even less of earthliness.

It seemed a long walk from Brierwood to Kingsbury through the white fog of that November morning. A year ago and Grace Redmayne had seldom known what it was to flag or tire upon that familiar journey; but to-day, with a thick mist brooding over the landscape, and with the confusion in her own mind, it seemed to her as if she were going through a strange country. Once she stopped by a little gate, and put her hand to her head for a moment or two, trying to collect her thoughts, and to overcome the dream-like feeling which made everything appear unreal.

'Am I really going to meet him—really going to be married?' she said to herself, 'or am I walking in my sleep?'

At last she came to the turnstile by the common, fully believing that the walk had taken her three hours, and fearing that her lover would have lost patience and gone away, leaving her to return to Brierwood ignominiously, in the face of that farewell letter.

No, he was standing by the turnstile, and received her joyously with outstretched arms and a bright smile.

'My sweetest, you are better than punctuality itself!' he exclaimed. 'You are a quarter of an hour before the appointed time.'

'What,' she cried, bewildered, 'isn't it very, very late?'

'No, Gracey, very early—a quarter to eight. I was here half an hour too soon.'

'It seemed so long,' she said, with a wondering look; 'I thought I should be hours too late.'

'You were nervous and excited, darling. You have brought your carpet-bag too, in spite of all I said, and much too heavy for those fragile arms to carry. Come, dear, you had better jump in at once. There's a nasty drizzling rain.'

There was, and Grace had been walking through the rain for the last ten minutes without being aware of the fact. The fly from Tunbridge was waiting. Mr. Walgrave handed her in, wrapped her tenderly in a fleecy carriage rug that was the very essence of warmth, and they drove off briskly along the soft miry road. It was not a bright morning for an elopement, the white mists had slowly melted away, leaving a gloomy landscape blurred with rain, under a low dim sky; but for Grace it was a journey through fairyland, the Tunbridge express an enchanter's car rather than a common earthly conveyance. Was she not with him? And he was so kind and tender, so thoughtful, so anxious for her comfort.

Even though London-bridge was a somewhat dirty and dispiriting place to arrive at, the girl's spirits did not falter. All fear, all doubt had vanished out of her mind, now she was with him. He was so good, so noble! Who could be base enough to doubt him?

It was only ten o'clock when they alighted at London-bridge. Hubert Walgrave put Grace into a cab, gave some brief direction to the cabman, and they drove off in a north-westerly direction.

'Are we going to drive straight to the church?' Grace asked, wondering whether she would be able to take off her veil and outer shawl, and arrange her bonnet in the vestry.

'No, dear; I am going to show you our house first, and to say a few serious words to you.'

His face was turned a little towards the window as he spoke.

'Our house!' she cried, with childish delight; 'are we really going to have a house?'

'Well, yes, dearest; we must live somewhere, you know. We are not like the birds of the air, and as I cannot leave London at this time of year, I have set up our household gods in the suburbs. I think you will like the nest I have chosen, Gracey dear.'

'How can I help liking it, if you do?'

'A true wife's answer!' he said, smiling at the bright spiritual face.

Her heart thrilled at the word.

'Your wife,' she murmured softly. 'How sweet the name sounds!'

'Yes, darling; it has been a sacred name ever since the days when Eve bore it—yet there was neither church nor law to give it to her. It is a word of deeper meaning than narrow-minded bigots think.'

The speech might have alarmed another woman, in so dubious a position as Grace Redmayne's; but over her pure mind it passed like a summer breath across deep water, without leaving a ripple.

'You were never in town before, were you, Grace?' her lover asked lightly. It was not time yet for that serious talk he had spoken of just now.

'Once only; father brought me, and we went to see the Tower and Madame Tussaud's.'

He pointed out churches and buildings as they passed. They seemed to be a long time in the streets, and as they went through Gray's-inn-lane, by King's-cross, and the wild wastes beyond—which formed at that time an arid desert of newly-begun railway arches, given over to desolation and bill-stickers—Grace hardly saw the metropolis in its most dignified aspect. She wondered a little that country people could be so delighted with London; but after passing the architectural splendours of Kentish-town, where the highest development of the builder's art was manifest in corner public-houses, they began to ascend Highgate-rise, which Grace thought pretty, and something like the outskirts of Tunbridge.

They stopped at a cottage on the very top of the hill—a toy dwelling-place of the gothic order—with tiny mullioned windows below, and miniature oriels above; just the kind of house to delight a girl of nineteen, unawakened to the consideration of coal-cellar, wash-house, and dustbin, or to the question whether the architect had so placed his kitchen that the smell of the dinner must needs pervade the drawing-room. It was one of those bewitching habitations which look ravishing in a drawing, and concentrate in a small compass all possible inconveniences of domestic architecture.

Mr. Walgrave dismissed the cab, and took Grace and her carpet-bag across a few square yards of garden into a tiny hall, and then into a drawing-room—such a drawing-room, Grace clasped her hands and looked round her with a cry of rapture.

Her lover had not been idle during his week of preparation. He had sent in hothouse flowers enough to fill a small conservatory, and to make the little room a positive bower. He had bought things with a man's reckless hand. One of the small sofas was loaded with silk-mercator's parcels, one of the side tables was heaped with perfumery, hairbrushes, fans, diamond-cut scent-bottles, little French slippers with big cherry-coloured bows, boxes of pale lavender gloves,

everything piled up pell-mell, and the papers that had enveloped them thrown in a heap into a corner of the room.

'You see I have not forgotten you, Grace,' he said, opening one of the silk mercer's parcels, and showing her half a dozen dresses such dresses as she could hardly have imagined out of a fairy tale. 'Of course there are no end of things I did not know how to buy, but you can drive down to the West-end this afternoon and select those for yourself.'

'How good you are to me!' the girl cried, standing by with clasped hands, while he unfolded the glistening silk dresses one after another, and flung them in billows of brightness at her feet—blue, rose, peach, maize, pearly gray, not a useful colour among them, chosen with a man's eye for mere prettiness in the abstract.

She stood like Margaret looking at her jewels in the cottage chamber, and with the tempter by her side.

'O, how lovely, how lovely! But, O, please stop, you are spoiling them!' she cried, agonised by his clumsiness.

He trampled ruthlessly on the silks, and took her to his breast and kissed her.

'My dear one, it is you who are lovely!' he whispered; 'do you think I shall admire you any more for these paltry auxiliaries? But it is worth all the silk dresses in Regent-street to see the light in your face as you look at them.'

She disengaged herself from him gently.

'Hubert,' she said, pointing to a clock on the mantelpiece, 'isn't it time for us to go to the church? I have heard my father say that people can't be married after twelve o'clock; but I suppose in London it's different.'

'London means liberty, Grace. People who live in London hold themselves accountable for their actions to their own consciences, not to their next-door neighbour.'

He glanced behind him to see that the door was shut, went over to it even to convince himself of the fact, and then came back to Grace with a sudden seriousness in his face and manner. He took both her hands, and looked down at her gravely and tenderly.

'Grace,' he said, 'I am going to put your affection to the crucible test. You pretend to be very fond of me, and I think you are; but after all you are little more than a schoolgirl, fifteen years my junior, and the love may be shallow—only a fancy perhaps at best.'

'No, no, no!' she cried vehemently; 'it was no fancy. I was breaking my heart when you came to me.'

'Now, Grace, God knows I love you as dearly as ever man loved a woman, and that I am ready to make any reasonable sacrifice for your sake; but—'

He paused, checked by a sudden huskiness, perhaps arrested also by something in the face looking up at him, which whitened to the lips.

'But what?' Grace Redmayne asked slowly.

'I cannot marry you. Your home shall be as bright a one as wife ever had, your lover as devoted as ever husband on this earth. Nothing but the empty form shall be wanting; and our union must needs be all the more sacred to me because it will be consecrated by a sacrifice on your part. I will love you all the days of my life, Grace, but I cannot marry you.'

She looked at him fixedly, with wide-open eyes that seemed to him to grow unnaturally large, and then change to a lighter colour as she looked. Her white lips moved, as if she tried to echo his words, in sheer amazement; but no sound came from them but a little choking cry, with which she fell heavily to the ground.

Hubert Walgrave remembered the scene of the viper in Clevedon Chase. He knelt down and raised her gently, with her head upon his knee, calling loudly for help.

The domestic offices were not remote, and it is possible that the newly-hired servants were lurking a little nearer than their legitimate abiding place. A young woman rushed into the room, shrieked, glanced at the heap of tumbled silks, jumped at once to the conclusion that her master and mistress had been quarrelling, and then began the usual cabalistic formula in fainting cases.

Without any effect, however. Grace Redmayne lay like a statue, white and cold, with her head upon her lover's knee.

'She is in the habit of fainting in this way,' Mr. Walgrave said nervously, 'it's constitutional. But I think you'd better send for the nearest doctor. Quick, quick!—good God, woman, what are you staring at!'

The housemaid fled to the cook, whom she dispatched in quest of a surgeon. Mr. Walgrave lifted the statue-like form with a great effort, and placed it gently on the sofa. He knelt down and laid his hand above the heart. Great heavens, what an awful stillness! He bent his ear down to the girl's breast and listened, but could hear no sound; and in a sudden terror rushed to the bell, rang violently, and then came back, to fling more water over the pallid face.

It was something worse than pallid. What was that cold bluish shade which crept over it as he looked?

He had not long to wait the answer to that question. The local surgeon came in, pushed him aside unceremoniously, and stooped down to examine the patient.

'Good God!' he exclaimed, after the briefest scrutiny, 'a case of heart disease. She is dead!'

CHURCH MUSIC

THERE are few things which have made more progress during the present generation than church music. Twenty or thirty years ago it was considered an addition to, rather than part of, the service, and Queen Elizabeth's injunction seems to give reason for this notion. The hymn was the gilt which covered the pill of the sermon, and somewhat relieved the boredom caused by the droning of the illiterate clerk. The arrangement was partial, and hard upon non-musical people, who probably had recourse to sweetmeats or snuff, according to their age. The music was not of a very high class, and a cultivation of it as an art was almost restricted to cathedrals and collegiate churches. Anything in the shape of choral service was considered an impertinence, and in parish churches generally, nothing was sung but the glorias and a few hymns. The canticles were rarely chanted, and to chant the psalms was considered rather popery. In remote village churches the services were read in some cases without the addition of a note of music; and when music was supplied, it was of an appalling character. The butler from the squire's, the gardener from the parson's, and such amateurs, would occupy the organ-gallery, armed with flutes, fiddles, violoncellos, and clarionets. These instruments had to be tuned during the service, and when they were tuned, the eccentric individuality of the performers, and the vain attempts of the singers to keep the peace with them, by adopting their notions of time, were almost too much for the most pious and unmusical in the congregation. Who does not know the numerous ludicrous incidents in connection with the Thackeray's celebrated Duke, who never went to church in town but used to sing the hymns in the family pew in the country with a fine effect, must have been a man of great moral courage. This came the period of innovation, and the barrel-organ was introduced into the village church, with its one or two barrels, each bristling with a few hymn tunes, and perhaps a chant, and a march for voluntary; 'Devizes,' the 'Old-hundredth,' the 'Emperor's hymn' &c., being taken with the regularity of the rotation of the farm crops. Then the village children were trained to sing these tunes to the admiration and emulation of the bucolic congregation. Presently we get the harmonium, which requires something more than a mechanical manipulation. Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses with a musical turn were in great demand, and clergymen's daughters exhibited a strong enthusiasm for, though unripe knowledge of, sacred music. This interference and assistance of the ladies of

parson's family has since, in many cases, proved a terrible nuisance. Twenty years ago, if a town had a large organ, it was a matter to boast of, and dissenters rarely indulged in such a luxury. The singers in the churches sat in the organ-loft at the west end, and sang their hymns, while the organist put in wonderful interludes between the verses. Only a few eccentrics in the congregation presumed to join in, and these generally made themselves conspicuous and disagreeable; the rest followed the words of the hymns by means of their gold eye-glasses, nodding their heads solemnly and reverently. People who have not yet arrived at middle age can remember all this—the dreariness and indifference which was the lot of all efforts in favour of church music. Within the last twenty years, however, matters have been wonderfully altered. The Puseyite movement caused a vitality in the direction of musical improvement hitherto unknown. The canticles were chanted, and then the psalms, following the example of cathedrals and collegiate churches. Little boys with dirty boots were put into surplices, and accompanied the clergy in their procession to the choir. Tradesmen, clerks, and professional men donned the white garment, and were rewarded for their pains by being pelted and hooted. Still the movement went on, the high-church party in the van, the low-church party following at a respectful distance, and dissenters a long way off. Then came the day when Anglican chants were discarded as frivolous, and Gregorians were yelled out by an excited congregation like an Indian war-cry. It was argued that as the creeds and services of the church were unchangeable, so should be the music; and so the clergy went back to the middle ages for their melodies; while, with strange inconsistency, they burnt the unhallowed gas of the nineteenth century, and worked their organs by steam and by hydraulic pressure. Anon full-blown ritualism was the order of the day. 'Hymns ancient and modern' were discarded by the extreme Catholics; and we had the strange contrast of a service of the severest type relieved by hymns, processional and recessional, which have little more dignity than a lively waltz. It was at this time that the monotonous style of preaching was given up, and that ranting of an extreme type accompanied the frantic hymns. The primitive Methodists were altogether beaten by the church of England.

We have remarked that music has made wonderful progress in our religious services. So it has. But, after all, what has it done in comparison with what it might do? With a few exceptions, the music of our churches is far below the standard of a third-class concert. Even in our cathedrals the services are sometimes very slovenly, the chanting of the psalms being a stumbling-block. The choirs in a few of them are miserably inefficient, and it will happen occasionally that six or eight boys, with only three or four men, have all the vocal work to do. The organ has to make up the

deficiencies, and, instead of being an accompaniment, becomes noisy and self-assertive. The earthquakes in the galleries of the Chapel Royal Whitehall, and St. Paul's Knightsbridge, are notable examples of the undue preponderance of the instrument. There are some places where a stranger would, as a matter of course, expect to hear music of a first-class character,—St. Paul's Cathedral, for instance; yet the slovenly singing heard there at times has been a matter of frequent comment. The mention of a few notable metropolitan churches would almost exhaust the list of those where really good music can be heard. First and foremost must be placed All Saints Margaret-street, where music of the most ambitious character is performed, and at the same time most hearty congregational singing. St. Andrew's Wells-street is another notable church. The service at the Temple is a model in its way, though anything but congregational; the people go to hear and not to sing. At St. Barnabas Pimlico the music is good and congregational, but not of an ambitious character. The music at the Foundling Hospital is fine, but there is nothing congregational about it. At Westminster Abbey there is a fine organ and a good choir, but the effect is not always good. The special services at St. Paul's Cathedral are notable for the large body of voices and the grand effect of some of the well-known hymns, in which the immense congregation heartily joins.

In some churches where the ritual is very high, the vestments gorgeous, and where it is evident that the money lavished upon the services is large, the musical effects are disappointing, as we have more than hinted already. It is generally supposed that in Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches the music is perfection; but this is not really the case. At the Brompton Oratory and St. George's Southwark good music can be heard; but in many Roman churches this part of the service is indifferent. The priests are often at loggerheads with the professional West-end choir, and the latter is sometimes very rusty. In the cathedral church of St. John's Salford, the musical portion of the service is very poor, the organ being a wretched one. In some of the Roman Catholic churches of Manchester the case is very different. In the provinces there are many instances of fine musical services, but these only make the exception. One of the most celebrated churches is the parish church of Leeds, whose vicars are made bishops and deans. Here we have a splendid choir, who attack music of the most difficult character. The organ is one of those wonderful instruments which combine great power with exquisite beauty of tone. The regulations for its preservation are most elaborate. The organist is one of the few great players we have, and a service at this church is a musical treat; yet it is not entirely a congregational one. Many churches in the country might be mentioned where the music is very good, but seems to frighten the congregation. Some of the dissenting chapels in the

olis are noted for good music, and in many of them the con-join in the singing; but neither in church nor chapel do we see music occupying its proper position.

The theory we hold is, that anything devoted to the service of church should be of the best. In the matter of architecture this has been followed; for there is nothing in secular architecture so magnificent or so perfect as our chief cathedrals and churches. In music, however, it appears that the concert-room and the theatre monopolise the best of everything. There is an idea that too much music, or music of too high a character, is an impertinence. We have squalling charity-children, or the quartet choir, or fussy professors, as the case may be. Any average musician is put on his back when he enters a church, and his torture culminates in the sermon. The discourse and the singing are worthy of each other, and both unworthy of the occasion and the subject. The service of congregational music may be divided into two parts—the vocal choir, and the congregation. Both are at present in a state of confusion. There is a great diversity of ideas upon their relative importance, but it may be laid down as a general rule, that in any service of advanced character there must be portions taken by choir and congregation conjointly, and portions for the choir alone. It is next to impossible to train a whole congregation to join in the elaborate services which only well-trained singers can attempt successfully. There are portions of the service, the chants, the responses, and the anthems, in which the congregation might reasonably be supposed to take an accurate part. Unfortunately musical education is at so low an ebb that this is at present impossible. Most people can join in a hymn and sing the melody, but there is not one in a hundred who can properly sing a part. This is the more lamentable when we remember the time and money spent on so-called musical education. Nearly every girl of the middle classes is taught to play the pianoforte, to the discomfiture of her friends and acquaintances. It may be that she has a taste for drawing or some other accomplishment; but no; fashion has ordained that she must play the piano, and perhaps, with a positive distaste for the drudgery, is obliged for years to go through the finger-drill, until she gives it up in disgust, or becomes, as has really been the case with so many, such an accomplished player, without the slightest knowledge of the theory of music, that if the veriest discord were put before her she would play it, her ear meanwhile in submission to the eye, without a note of the horrible rubbish wanting. It is also the case with the boys, who are forced for youths to try their hands and mouths at harmoniums, flutes, cornets, flutes, let alone such instruments of torture as the organ, the violin, and the concertina. Now supposing that any of these attain proficiency, it is probable that no one will care to hear them, and that the payment of a shilling or so, the masters of any solo

instruments can be heard. If they would undertake to play an instrument which might be useful in a band, it would be better, but they won't; they must play solo instruments. Meanwhile they always carry about with them that noblest of instruments, the human voice, which they do not know how to use. They might as well be dumb. If the boys and girls of our public, private, and charity schools had only an hour or two a week devoted to the training of their voices in any public assembly, we might find a ready-made chorus. Very few people are incapable of singing. The human voice generally contains an octave and a half of musical notes, sufficient for ordinary part-singing. A band of drunken Germans going home late at night will charm the irate householder, whose indignation is aroused by a comparatively sober Briton howling out 'Champagne Charlie.'

When we have made every boy and girl, not absolutely incapacitated, a vocalist who can read simple music, there will be no difficulty about our church services. Then it may be considered whether the time has not arrived to add to the instrumental strength of our church music. The organ is sufficient for all ordinary purposes; but on festival occasions we might have a full orchestra, as they do in Roman Catholic churches. Some people think that it is impossible to praise God by scraping catgut, or beating a drum; but the same argument might extend to the man who blows the bellows, works the hydraulic machine, or tends the steam-engine which supplies the organ with wind. It might also be used with reference to the partly mechanical work of the organist himself. Something has already been done in the direction of orchestral music. A trumpet is occasionally heard in Westminster Abbey; and, we believe, a harp at St. Andrew's Wells-street. At St. Paul's Cathedral, upon one occasion, when Martin Luther's judgment-hymn was sung, a man with a trumpet was placed in the whispering-gallery; no doubt to take the part of the archangel sounding the last trumpet. If this sort of thing were carried out in its absurdity, it might lead to the revival of the ancient mystery; but if the principle of the admission of an orchestra is granted, the results might be sublime. Here is a field for enthusiastic young clergymen. No fear of bishops or privy councils. Let them not trouble themselves about vestments, or incense, or candles; but let them either preach a good short sermon, or engage a good preacher; then, if they have a large well-trained choir, and a musical congregation containing, say, a thousand educated voices, if on festival occasions they can add a powerful orchestra, there would be little difficulty in finding the funds. It may be that people would go for the sake of the music; but we can't deal with that argument here, except to ask if church services should be made as repulsive as possible, in order to insure that only the sincere should attend them? Whether it be from affectation, from pure love, or through fashion

music is now the art which is most cultivated by the people. Why we should only have a burlesque of it in our churches is not clear. It is true that there may be devotion in a barn without any external pomp or rich offerings; but as men can only judge of devotion by externals, it is as fair to judge those who give their best to the service of God to be devout, as it is to suppose that those who lead a good life are influenced by a love of morality. When we read of the magnificent services of the Jewish church, and of the heartiness of the primitive Christians, and when we remember that the influence of the church has produced some of the finest musical works ever written, it is difficult to think of dreary Scottish precentors, of the awful horrors of the conventicle, and of the stupid productions heard in the church of England with patience. The day may perhaps arrive when our splendid temples shall be filled with harmony as perfect as the symmetry of the buildings, with melody as exquisite as the decorations, and with a volume of praise as massive as the foundations, and as real as the piety of those who laid them.

HOW I CAME TO FAIL IN LITERATURE

I DON'T suppose that in these days anybody cares for the troubles of authors. If a man or woman either expect to gain any sympathy for their heart-sickness by confiding their griefs to the public, they are grievously mistaken. Who sympathises with the failing voices of singers, who with the failing eyes of painters, who with the failing hearts of authors? Life is for the strong, the weak must die: such the creed of the day, a creed which shall hereafter bear a fruit that may much astonish its well-fed professors.

My only excuse for sharing my disappointment with the world is, that the incident which led to it was indirectly the result of my own stupidity. It may be a warning to others to read of it. My prospects as a *littérateur* were at first by no means discouraging. I had written sundry books for children which had been well received and which brought in some profit, although not much. I had been engaged in a compilation for a publisher, whom I will call Mr. Nixon. I had done the thing to his satisfaction, and I had almost completed an original work, which my publisher had nearly made up his mind to undertake. One morning I received from him a note which ran in this fashion: 'Dear Barber, will you come down and dine on Thursday at six? I will talk over your book after dinner.' Need I say that I accepted the invitation?

Nixon lived in a very pleasant mansion in Hertfordshire, a house lying on a sunny well-wooded slope, commanding a sweet fertile little valley, through which wandered a streamlet, here and there expanding into a pool or tiny lake. It lay about a mile from the station, and a pleasant field-path led across to it through the churchyard. The train I came down by gave me a full hour to reach the house. I had dressed before I started, wearing a light coat over my dinner costume; and tempted by the fineness of the evening, I loitered slowly along the footpath till I came to the old church. It was a dear old church. Now I am a great lover of churches, and delight especially in finding one untouched by the ravages of restorers. I had met the rector on the way, and knew that I should find his church almost intact, he being indeed a venerable ecclesiastic of the evangelical type. For when on my way to a church I meet a smart young parson with a cassock waistcoat and brisk business look, my heart sinks into my shoes; he means energy, improvement, smart little school-houses, smart churches restored after the ideas of one of the fashionable architects.

the day, all the history of the old church gone, its meaning utterly effaced.

This little church in Hertfordshire had suffered only from church-wardens, who, being merely utilitarian creatures desirous of saving rates, had patched and plastered with unfeeling hands, but had left much untouched—much that delighted my church-loving eyes. I had entered by a little door on the north side; for my egress the old sexton unbarred the great south door, which opened into a porch whence the fair green churchyard sloped down to a thicket of flowering shrubs crowned by tall trees, which hid the village parsonage. And on this pleasant summer evening the sight of those quiet graves, lit up by the slanting rays of the declining sun, gave a calm and quiet content to a restless heart. But there was one horrible sight which marred the peace and beauty of the scene. In a corner of the graveyard stood a monstrous marble monument, as bright and shiny and staring as the whitest of marble and brightest of enamel could make it. Two angels, life-size—as far as I can judge, who have never met with any of the species—stood on the top, with clasped hands pointing to the skies; at each corner of the tomb were iron pots with dangling chains.

The clock struck six; the old church had detained me longer than I fancied. I should be late for Mr. Nixon's dinner; and I knew him to be a punctual nervous man. I hurried on fast, and reached the house heated and flustered, found everybody waiting in the drawing-room, Nixon, watch in hand, cross and captious. I have not eaten his salt since, and I may disinterestedly confess that his dinner was an uncommonly good one; and as I sat next to a pretty lively girl who was staying in the house, I enjoyed myself much. She, too, was a great lover of churches, and drew me out upon the subject. Warmed by her approving glances, and by two or three glasses of champagne, I began to talk fast and well—gave her a graphic sketch of the old church and the old parson and the old sexton; and by and by I found that the conversation about me had ceased, and that I had the ear of the table. I had come to the porch of the old church, and the pleasant God's-acre and the hideous monument in the corner, and waxed righteously indignant on the subject. What right had a man, merely because he was rich, to disfigure such a simple pretty spot with the vulgar memories of his wealth and ostentation? I scathed the angels with withering sarcasm, metaphorically I spat into the iron pots. As I spoke, a chill and shudder came over the people at the table; dessert was only just on, but the ladies rose, their wine untasted; my pretty friend fled from my side, and I was left at one end of the mahogany table dumb and confounded.

Nixon looked at me with a sickly smile.

'I've got a beastly headache,' he said. 'You won't mind my

leaving you, Barber. Help yourself to wine; but mind and *don't* miss your train, for there's nothing after 8.20. I don't feel *well* enough to go into the book affair.'

There was another guest beside myself, and we pushed the decanters about for a while, and then coffee was brought in to us with a message that the ladies were very sorry, but Miss Nixon—Nixon was a widower, and his daughter presided at his table—Miss Nixon was very poorly, would we take our coffee downstairs? I thought that they were an uncommonly queer family; but that I had done anything to cause the disturbance in the house I had not the least idea. The other guest and myself walked quietly away to the station, and passed through the churchyard. I went up to the horrible monument, drawn to it by an irresistible fascination—there was an inscription on the side.

'Sacred to the memory of Felicia, the beloved wife of John Nixon, Esq., of Founthill, in this parish.' There was some poetry besides, but I couldn't read that. I could only sit down on a mound of turf and gasp for breath.

'What's the matter?'

'Why, it's his *WIFE's* monument I've been poking fun at!'

'Didn't you know?' said my friend.

'Know! do you think I'm such a heartless brute as to'—and then, despite my remorse and compunction, the comicality of the thing so struck my mind that I went off into a roar of laughter, in which my friend heartily joined.

We heard a rustling behind us, and hastily rising, we saw a dark figure turning back along the path to Founthill. It was Nixon, who, as I afterwards found, every night paid a visit to the little churchyard on the hill. Poor faithful little soul! that I should have so wounded it, is to me one of the saddest memories of my life; and yet I can't help laughing whenever I think of it. I don't laugh, however, when I see my pile of unpublished ms. every day growing larger. If I subside eventually into a critic, those marble angels will be to blame for it.

POOR JAMES WYMPER

WHEN he was a child they called him 'poor little James.' He wasn't little, and he wasn't poor, so far as worldly goods went; but did those who called him 'poor' use the word in kindness towards the motherless neglected boy. He had red eyelids. No power could brush his hair smooth, or keep the knees of his trousers clean. He had a wonderful facility for cutting his fingers, and wrapping them up in unpleasant-looking rags. He always had a cold in his head. At the age of twelve he could barely read two syllables. His only use in the world appeared to be to serve as an awful example to naughty boys, who would play with knives and disliked soap and water; and for this purpose he was used pretty freely. They sent him to a big school, where he did nothing but get bullied; and when his father died, and left him very poor in a new sense of the word, a distant relative who took him in charge out of charity could find no better employment for him than to sweep out the office and run errands. By this time he had ceased to be 'poor little James,' and became POOR JAMES WYMPER.

He could do nothing good of himself, and by some curious perversity set himself to undo the good others had done. He had a knack for taking things to pieces by no means equalled by his capacity to put them together again. He complained that they did not give him time, and declared that this granted, the condition of the specimens of his handiwork would be improved. Be this as it might, every piece of mechanism that fell in his way, from his cousin's sewing-machine to the great hydraulic press at his protector's works, was made to suffer.

He had a fatal facility for always being in the way. He seemed to be all elbows. He could not move ten steps to save his life without treading upon some one's toes, or upsetting something. When he spoke to him, he was always in a fog. 'The boy is half an idiot,' groaned the worthy cotton-spinner, whose bread he ate.

At the age of eighteen he had made only two friends in the world, a blacksmith and a cat—an evil-minded black Tom, who swore at every one else, and bit them savagely when they attempted to put him through the tricks which poor James Wympers had taught him. Amateur hammering at the forge did not improve untidy Jim's appearance, and his cat—not being in a show—did not increase his income. He ran errands for his cousin like a boy when he had attained man's estate, until one day when he ran one for himself—and did not come back again.

Fears were entertained that he had come to a bad end. The police were put in motion and rewards offered; but his friend the blacksmith, upon being pressed, said that he had gone to 'Mereker'—cat and all.

I do not think that his relations were broken-hearted. I fancy that good Mr. Bryce the cotton-spinner was rather glad to be rid of his wife's cousin the errand-boy. His wife, who was not unkind to the forlorn lad in a way of her own—a very cold way it was—sighed several times apropos of nothing, and murmured, 'Poor James Wympers!'

Five years passed, and Mrs. Bryce was left a widow, by no means so well provided for as she expected to be. Moreover there was a lawsuit about the will, and a squabble in the winding-up of the partnership. She was glad to 'get shut'—as her defunct lord would have said—of Manchester; and seeing an advertisement to the effect that a widow lady having a house too large for her, pleasantly situated on the Thames near Maidenhead, was prepared to share it with just such a person as herself, transported herself thither, after a due exchange of references and suchlike formalities, and found no reason to regret what she had done.

The other widow does not figure much in this story, and therefore it will be enough to say that she was a quiet lady-like woman, rather afraid of her partner in housekeeping, with a daughter, aged eighteen, who ruled the pair, and made the place very pleasant.

Bessy Jervoise was not pretty. Besides her eyes she had not a good feature in her face; but it was a *good* face—earnest and loving, with a sub-current of fun running under it (as the stream runs under the water-lilies), and rippling out constantly. Her figure and her hair were simply perfection. Her little thoroughbred hands were ever busy, and the patter of her dainty feet was pleasant music in many a poor cottage.

Things went on very smoothly at the river-side villa until one rainy day, when, without a 'with your leave,' or 'by your leave,' or letter, or telegram, or message, or any other sort of preparation, in marches poor James Wympers, dripping with rain and splashed with mud up to his hat!

'If you please, cousin Margaret, I've come back,' he said, subsiding in his old low-spirited way into an amber-satin drawing-room chair, which in two minutes he soaked through and through.

That was all. No excuse, no petition; a simple announcement that he had come back, conveyed in a manner which made it sufficiently clear that he intended to remain. 'If you please, cousin Margaret, I've come back.' Not another word did he say, and re-lapsed into thinking of something else, as usual.

Interrogated respecting his luggage, he replied that it was on

the hall-table, and there, sure enough, was found a sodden bundle containing a soiled flannel-shirt, a pair of slippers, two pipes, a cloth cap without a peak, and a sailor's knife. In answer to farther inquiries he stated that his means were eightpence, that he had been living in America, that he had walked from Liverpool, and that he wanted something to eat. When dried and fed, and asked what he was going to do, he said, 'Whatever you please;' and appearing to consider that all difficulty was thus disposed of, he went to sleep.

Poor Mrs. Bryce was at her wits' end. Ordinary hints were thrown away upon such a man. When she said she supposed he was going on to London, he replied, O dear no, he had come from London. When she told him she was only a lodger in the house, he observed that it was a very nice house to lodge in. I have said that she was kind to him in her way when he was an errand-boy, and somehow she could not be hard upon him now. There was something half ludicrous, half melancholy, in his helplessness that disarmed them all. Bessy declared him to be the largest baby she had ever seen, persisted in speaking of him as *it*, and scandalised the matrons by inquiring gravely after tea, which of them was going to put *it* to bed.

'It's rather unkind for you to jest so, Bessy,' said poor Mrs. Bryce, 'when you see how distressed I am. What on earth am I to do?'

'I suppose it's too old for the Foundling?' mused Bessy.

'Bessy, be quiet!' said her mother.

'You dear old darling,' said the pert one afterwards, 'don't you see that *we* cannot treat this thing seriously without making it doubly painful for dear Mrs. Bryce? It will all come right in the end.'

'Yes, my dear, but when is the end to begin?'

It was to begin by special arrangement the next day, after breakfast; when the following conversation took place:

'Now, James,' said his cousin, 'we shall not be interrupted for some time, and you must really give me your serious attention.'

'Yes, cousin Margaret.'

'You see, James, you are a man now, and must act and be treated—do you understand?—*treated*, like other people.'

'That's just what I want to be.'

'Well, then, I must tell you frankly that I am much annoyed by your coming here as you did.'

'It wasn't my fault that it rained, cousin Margaret. I wish it hadn't,' he replied piteously.

'I'm not speaking of your coming in wet and spoiling the chairs, sir; I am much annoyed at your coming here at all.'

The good widow thought that she would get on best by being angry, but it was no use.

'Where else *was* I to go to?' he asked.

POOR JAMES WYMPER

'How you found me out, I cannot think,' sighed the victim. The observation was an unlucky one.

'Ah, ha!' he chuckled, 'you thought I was a stupid, did you?' and then followed a long weary story of how passing through London he had seen this person and spoken to that, and obtained the clue by which he had hunted his listener down. What really provoked was the credit he took for this cleverness. He returned to his subject as he went on, and finished with the air of one who had rendered an important service, and expected to have it promptly recognised.

This drew his victim's cut-and-dried speeches off the line.

'O dear, O dear!' she cried. 'It doesn't matter how you found me; you have done so. The question is, what am I to do with you now you're here? What *am* I to do with you?'

'I don't know, cousin Margaret.'

'You don't know! A pretty answer for a man of five- or six-and-thirty. Now look here, James Wympier. I should like to do something for you for your poor mother's sake, but I cannot; and—and you have no right to thrust yourself upon me like this, and—and—be me attending to me, James Wympier?'

'Yes, cousin Margaret,' he replied with a jerk, coming suddenly forward.

'What was I saying?'

'That you would like to do something for me for my poor mother's sake.'

'That was only half what I said, sir. How dare you pick out my words like that! I went on to say that I couldn't do anything for you, and I can't. I've not the means. I'm very poor; I can hardly manage for myself. My husband left me very badly off.'

'But he leave me anything?'

'You! after your conduct—running away, and frightening us—is it likely?'

'I know it was wrong to run away, cousin Margaret, but you have come back again,' he said with the utmost gravity.

This was conclusive. For the last half-hour she had been trying to get him to see his head that he had no business to come back, and taking credit for having returned, as an act which atoned for all the offences of his youth! Perceiving that his words would never, *never* run away again. What was to be done? Talking was clearly useless. One of two courses presented themselves—to endure him, or call a policeman and turn him out.

She decided to call a policeman.

James Wympier during the next two or three days, if not called by another man, would have roused the in-

dignation of all concerned by its almost sublime audacity. The proceedings of Mr. Charles Mathews in *Cool as a Cucumber* are timid and retiring in comparison with those of Mrs. Jervoice's unwelcome guest. If the house and all it contained had belonged to him, and its inhabitants were dependents upon his bounty, he could not have behaved more freely; and all this with an air of innocence which utterly disarmed opposition.

'O, never mind me,' was his refrain; 'I don't want to trouble anybody. I'll do it all for myself. *I'm* all right. You let me alone and see.'

His first great exploit was to precipitate himself upon a washing and wringing machine which he found, out of order and disused, in a cellar; and whether he had improved in dexterity, or sufficient time was granted him for the realisation of his ideas, need not be discussed here. The result was satisfactory. Not only did he put the thing into working order, but he worked it himself, to the intense delight of Bessy and consternation of the cook.

Many other useful things he did. He made a wind-mill which pumped water up to the top of the house, and saved the sixpence a day which had been paid to a boy for this labour. He mended an old boat there was, and took Bessy out for rows on the river. He became that young lady's right-hand man in her garden. Before a month was over, not only had cousin Margaret become quite resigned to have him on her hands, but Mrs. Jervoice refused to accept any remuneration for his board and lodging, declaring that he was well worth his keep. It was something, you see, for these lone women to have a man about the house who could and would put his hand to this and that. He did not cut his fingers now.

Before this satisfactory condition of affairs had been arrived at, tailor and hosier had been set to work, and really poor James Wympers brightened up wonderfully in appearance under their hands. If his head had not been so big, and his elbows and knees so uncomfortably conspicuous, he would not have been a bad-looking man. He was evidently a good-hearted one. He would do anything in his power, poor fellow, for any one; was in fact rather too active sometimes when he had been longer than usual in one of his fogs, on which occasions he would labour like an amiable bull in a china shop, and cause some consternation. Of course he made friends with the nearest blacksmith.

In the early days, when he had not ceased to be considered a nuisance and an intruder, Bessy had stood his friend. One always takes an interest in those one befriends, and Bessy took a great interest in poor James Wympers—drawing him out, encouraging him, and defending him against practical jokes; but as time passed this young person's feelings towards him appeared to undergo a change. Instead of praising what he did, and encouraging him to farther ex-

ertion, she found fault and snubbed him. She ceased to make fun of him as 'it,' and had a store of little bitter disparaging remarks—about his dependence, his want of self-respect, and so on—ready to shoot at him. 'I think you are too severe on poor James Wympers,' Mrs. Jervoice would say; 'he is really very willing, and one must not expect too much of him, poor fellow.' If another man had done what he did, he would not have been damned with such faint praise, but he was only 'poor James Wympers;' and, like the proverbial prophet, had little credit in his own country.

One morning was marked with an unusual event—poor James Wympers received a letter with American stamps upon it.

Amongst the visitors at Willow Bank—the Thames-side villa of Mrs. Jervoice—was a certain Mr. Augustus Bailey, a young gentleman of pleasing and varied accomplishments. He could sing you music-hall songs nearly as well as the 'great comiques' his masters. He could imitate most celebrated actors, and was a mighty punster. For the better exhibition of such talents a butt was indispensable, and he found one ready made in poor James Wympers. It is needless to observe that poor James Wympers did not love Mr. Augustus Bailey; but it was curious that a usually amiable girl like Bessy Jervoice should encourage the latter in sallies which were often as ungenerous as they were insolent.

'I want you to put my sewing machine in good order, Mr. Wympers,' said Bessy one day, 'and mind it works smoothly, for I've got to make a dress in a hurry.'

'What for?' asked he.

'A picnic.'

'What's a picnic?'

'Don't tease.'

'Very well;' and he set to work on the sewing machine.

Bessy took a seat beside him, and mollified by his obedience, condescended to explain the rites and mysteries of a picnic. This one was got up by Mr. Augustus Bailey, and—as she narrated—it was 'Mr. Bailey will provide' this, and 'Mr. Bailey thinks' that; until the workman threw down his screw-driver in a passion, and exclaimed, 'Confound Mr. Bailey!' Bessy was astonished. She got as far as, 'Why, you're not jeal—' when she became very red, and checked herself.

'I'm not what?' asked poor James Wympers.

'You're not so stupid as you try to make out, sir.'

'That's not what you were going to say.'

'How do you know?'

'You said, "you are not jel"—something.'

'Not, jelly then, or salt or sugar, that you should melt in a shower,' she replied. The last-quoted opinion of the great Augustus had been that it was sure to rain—so this observation of Miss

Bessy was not as inappropriate as it may at first appear. But why should she have blushed so? And if she had really intended to tell him he was not jelly, why did she not go on and say so? Besides, he had not confounded Mr. Bailey because that authority had predicted rain, and Miss Bessy knew it. She flattered herself that she had got very cleverly out of a difficulty, and the blush changed to a smile; but she had only made bad worse. To tell a man that he will not suffer under the rain on a stated occasion, naturally implies that he may be subjected to a wetting on such occasion; and—

‘O, then I’m to go!’ said poor James.

This was a poser. He had not been invited, and there was a reason why he could not be. He looked up from his work with such a happy smile on his great broad face that Bessy’s heart smote her.

‘Well, you see, the gentlemen are mostly friends of Mr. Bailey. We invite them, you know, but—you won’t be hurt if I tell you the truth, James Wympers?’

‘Does truth hurt?’

‘Sometimes. The fact is, that it is customary at water picnics for the gentlemen to provide the boats and music and wine, and that costs money, you know.’

‘O, so I cannot go because I have not got money to pay my share, eh?’

‘You would not like to place yourself under an obligation to Mr. Bailey and his friends, I suppose?’ she said with a sneer.

‘I wish you would not curl your lip so when you speak, Miss Jervoise. That *does* hurt,’ he said, with a low voice and bended head.

‘I beg your pardon!’

‘O, never mind. But suppose,’ he continued gaily, as though a bright thought had struck him, ‘I were to help to row one of the boats, and arrange the dinner and that, wouldn’t they let me come?’

‘I never saw such a man!’ Bessy exclaimed, losing all patience. ‘Have you no single spark of self-respect—no dignity? O, how can you be so mean-spirited!’

‘Work is as good as money any day,’ he replied, looking her full in the face.

‘Yes, if you go as a servant.’

‘You said just now that every one had to make himself useful at a picnic.’

‘It’s no use arguing with you; you *will* not or cannot understand.’

‘You don’t want me to go?’

‘On the contrary, I should like you to join us if—’

‘If I had the money?’

‘If you could go on an equality with the rest.’

‘Well, I’ve got five pounds. Is that enough?’

And, if you'll believe me, this man set to work with the machine he had just set in order, and ran four breadths of the blue serge together as tight as wax and as straight as a rule, without misstitch.

As Bessy made a point of his being invited, and Mr. Augustus Bailey was her humble servant, and hoped to be something, no difficulty arose on this point; but on another there was trouble. Some Cockneys had misbehaved themselves on the meadows, and it was fixed that our party should dine, and the proprietor, having his heart against all picnickers, had refused his permission. The outing was nearly given up, when it was discovered that a mile or two farther on there was an estate to let bordering on the river. The great Augustus made it all right with the agent.

The next day poor James Wympster disappeared before breakfast and did not return till night.

Where had he been? To London. What for? Why, to get some new clothes, to be sure! Did they think he was going to let that skunk (by which term, I am sorry to say, he permitted himself to designate the elegant and highly-scented Augustus Bailey) think they think he was going to let that skunk insult him again without his coat?

'I hope you did not think I had run away again, cousin Margaret,' he added with some anxiety.

There was nothing to find fault with in his personal appearance on the morning of the picnic—dark green and black heather-tinted suit, tie to match, black felt wideawake, with a little maroon feather stuck in the band.

'Dear me!' exclaimed Mrs. Jervoise; 'he looks quite



During the embarkation and the row up the river poor James Wympers conduct was peculiar. Instead of doing everything for everybody, as usual, he stood apart, and ordered people about royally.

'I'm quite pleased with you to-day,' whispered Bessy, as he handed her out of the boat on the banks of the estate that was to let.

'Now, I say, you—er—what's your name?—you, Wympers, come and help take the hampers out!' said the great Augustus.

'Take them out yourself, you—er, Bailey!' he shouted back. 'You haven't been rowing; I have;' and he strutted on to join a party of ladies, including Bessy. Bessy turned on hearing the loud talking, and somehow got detached from her friends.

'Why are you pleased with me to-day, Miss Jervoise?' he asked, as they sauntered on together side by side through the shrubbery.

'Would you very much like to know?'

'I shouldn't have asked unless.'

'Guess, then.'

'Because I've been making myself disagreeable?'

'I don't think you have been making yourself disagreeable.'

'Well, then, because I haven't been making myself useful?'

'That is not the way to put it; but you are burning.'

'Because I've got new clothes?'

'Nonsense! You know what I mean, or you wouldn't have answered as you did at first. Good gracious! I hope it is not going to rain.'

'Tell me why,' he persisted.

'O, don't tease.'

'All right.'

As soon as he did not want to know, she, woman-like, wanted to tell him. So in a minute or two she began again.

'It is a great mistake to make oneself too cheap. There are some people who gain respect by being good-natured, and some people who lose it.'

'Ah, I see!' he replied; 'I won't be good-natured any more.'

'O, you *are* so silly! Don't you know there is a medium in everything? But really it *is* going to rain; I felt a big drop. My new blue costume will be ruined.'

'Well, we can go into the house. Here it is.'

The shrubbery walk was so thickly hedged that they had not seen where they were going, and at a sudden turn there, sure enough, was the villa close at hand.

'I suppose we might stand under the verandah?' suggested Bessy; and doubling up her skirts, she ran for it; for the rain came down with a dash—came down with a slant too, driven by the wind, so that the verandah gave them little shelter.

'I wonder if any of the windows' (they were French windows, opening to the ground) 'are open?' said her companion, trying them.

'O, we mustn't go in,' said Bessy.

'Very well.'

'But the splashing is spoiling my dress; don't you see? and my boots will be wet through,' pleaded the inconsistent one.

'Then go in,' said poor James Wympers, opening a window, 'and I will run round and make it all right with the people in charge.'

In ten minutes he rejoined her, saying that it *was* all right.

'What a pretty room!' she said, looking at herself in the picture glass. (Did you ever know a girl to enter a strange room without going straight up to the glass?)

'Hum—m, yes,' he replied; 'but the fellow who built it was an ass. Why, you have to twist your neck to get a view of the river from these things'—with a contemptuous kick towards the French windows. 'If I had it, I'd knock that verandah into a cock hat, break out a big bow in the middle, and then it would be something like.'

'O, you'd work wonders, I daresay,' she said, rather crossly. 'only it would be as well to do something towards getting a house of your own before you think about improving other people's.'

'It *would* be nice to have a house of one's own,' he said, 'particularly—'

'Well, go on.'

'Particularly if it had a bow window.'

'James Wympers!'

'And a pretty meadow for picnics; but I suppose it would do to give people leave to picnic on one's grounds?'

'Why not?'

'Would that not be being good-natured?'

'I did not mean that sort of good nature.'

'If I had a fine house and grounds like this, I might be good-natured then?'

'It's no use arguing with you,' she replied sharply. 'I never ever going to leave off? Our picnic will be quite spoiled.'

'Never mind; we'll have another soon. I daresay Sam will send me some more money.'

'Are you not ashamed of yourself, James Wympers, to take money like a beggar?' she said, with flashing eyes.

'O, I don't take it like a beggar.'

'Yes, you do.'

'No, I don't.'

'A man who takes money that he does not earn, takes it like a beggar—there!'

'Who told you I take money I do not earn?'

'Of course you cannot earn it.'

'Why of course?'

'What a plague you are! What do you do to earn it?'

'Nothing now.'

'What have you ever done?'

'Lots of things.'

'Do you mean to say that this person you call "Sam" really owes you money?' She came quickly to his side as she spoke, and laid her hand on his arm.

'Yes, he does.'

'What for?'

'For my share of what we did at Chicago.'

'That could not have been much.'

'What?'

'Your share.'

'Sam says it was half: Sam's generally right.'

'Where is Chicago?'

'Well, now, that is good! You don't know where Chicago is, and you're clever. I know.'

'Of course, when you've been there.'

'That's true,' he replied, after reflection.

'Did you really get your living there?' she asked.

'Yes, I did.'

'Then go back. O James, do—*do* go back. I can't bear to see you as you are—dependent and looked down on. O, do go back, and work like a man. I suppose it is because we women are so dependent that we prize and honour independence. For me there is nothing so contemptible as a strong man who is idle and contented. Go back to Chicago. I shall be sorry to lose you, because—because I like you very much, and you have been very kind to me; but, don't you know, cannot you imagine, how happy, how glorious it must be to strive and conquer; to stand erect before the world, owing nothing but to God and your own honest labour?'

'I can, I do!' he cried, starting up. 'It is glorious. Do you know, can you imagine, what it is to have people despising you as a fool—an incapable—and yet to feel here' (he struck his massive forehead as he spoke) 'that you were wronged, that you had not fair play? To feel knowledge, invention, power, coming, growing, *burning* in your brain;—to see the ideas thus born forming themselves under your hands, and to know that they were right and sound;—to make those who came to scoff, stay to praise? For this,' he added, in a lower voice, 'I humbly thank Almighty God, and good Sam Thacker.'

Now, when Bessy Jervoice had had her say, as above recorded, and, piqued by surprise and excitement, and perhaps by something else, had said more than a well-regulated young lady ought to say, she naturally sat down and cried; but wonderstruck by the response she had evoked—a response which grew more astonishing, more fervid as it proceeded—she slowly raised her eyes; and there,

before her, stood a James Wympers she had never seen before a *poor* James Wympers in any sense of the term. The cut right; and the magnificent head, its features lit up with pleasure—well, it must out—*love*, was a sight to see.

‘Forgive me,’ he said, taking her trembling hand, ‘for played a part. It was Sam Thacker’s doing. Said Sam, “back a rich man amongst those cusses” (Sam is a regular you know), “and they’ll just crawl over you, and suck you you sham poor and stupid, and you’ll soon see who’s who. Bessy, how kind you were to me at first! Am I wrong in this in hoping, that what was not so kind lately was meant for my

‘O, but how unfair—how—’

‘Scold me presently, but hear my story. I ran away from Chester, because I felt dimly that I could improve and invent if I had a chance; but I was awkward with my hands. I could draw, I could not plan. I was not ready with my tongue; I could not explain; I got impatient when people did not understand and all went badly until I fell in with Sam. Sam is the best fellow in the world; and as for talking, he could coax a ‘pos out of his hole; but, at first, he hadn’t one idea of his own. We worked together, and as we went on, I got handy and Sam in and to make a long story short, we sold two patents for fifty dollars each, and we have four more, which bring in at least a thousand a year in English money as royalties. I’m going to have my share in this picnic out of that money; and it is quite true Sam sent me the cash, because all my remittances come from him.’

‘I—I think,’ stammered astonished Bessy, ‘that we must stop here any longer.’

‘Just a few minutes.’

‘They will think it so odd.’

‘As you please. Will you have these flowers?’ And she handed a bouquet from a vase on the table.

‘Put them back directly. How can you! Taking what does not belong to you! O James!’

‘I bought the estate last week,’ replied poor James quietly, ‘and I suppose the flowers go with it.’

‘Mr. Wympers, are you mad, or am I dreaming?’ gasped Bessy.

‘I bought the place as soon as I heard you were coming. That’s why I went to London—and to get some clothes.’

‘Please, take me back to mamma;’ and Bessy begged to go again.

‘When you have answered me one question. I have not asked it; but yet—’

But yet! The stupid fellow! it was evident that he had yet patented a machine for divining a girl’s thoughts. I

hammered and beat about the bush, as he did in his pre-Sam-ter days, and at last got it out. What was it? Jessy left that room, as Sam would say, 'inside an elbow,' with accepted lover's kiss tingling her lips, and glorifying her heart. Never mind what had become of the picnics; never mind the shment of Mr. Augustus Bailey and the rest when, invited master of the house to have their dance in his dining-room (count of the wet), they learned who that master was; never the explanation with cousin Margaret. The only thing which re not having space to do justice to is the conduct of Sam at edding, and the burning wrath and indignation of the honest when he heard that his partner had been once known as POOR WYMPER.

Poor! he almost howled; 'why, there ain't a *machine* run in this old hemisphere, or in the *United States*, that he can't ve and beat. *Poor!* and he with the heart of a child and the of a Newton! *Poor* indeed! Let me catch any one calling oor, and I'll get mad; and when I get mad, there's shootin' . Yes, *sir*.'

ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE.

IMAGINARY LONDON

A delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

IV. RAFAELLE-PLACE AND ST. GUIDO'S-WOOD.

'HUDDLED in the variety of things, and thrown into the miscellany of life,' I have seen in my time many mobs. Sometimes it has been the ignoble crowd rising in tumult, with mad words and loud tongues, hurling stones and brands, and all the violence which fury could supply, until some grave and pious man appeared, and, hushing the rabble to silence, quenched their innate desire for blood. Such a grave and pious speaker threw oil on the mob-ocean from the balcony of the Paris Hôtel de Ville in 1830. His name was Alphonse de Lamartine. Crowds at coronation exhibition openings, at funerals and royal entries, at lordship shows, at gala theatre performances, at weddings and at hanging—all these have I beheld, 'huddled in the variety of things, and into the general miscellany of life.'

But, for an affable assemblage, a cheerful concourse, a happy crowd, a merry mob, which has made up its mind before to be pleased, and whom no *contretemps* can throw out of countenance, I commend me to the contesseration of humanity gathered together the first Monday in May in the saloons of the Royal Academy of Art. It is the day of the opening of the Exhibition—the Exhibition as it was fondly called before the mania set in to which we owe our distressing bazaars known as 'International.' Nowadays, instead of South Kensington, and of a hundred concurrent shows, instead of the 'Walk up, walk up, just a-going to begin; or a shilling!' order, we are fain to speak of the 'Exhibition' as the 'Academy.' Well, the Academy conflux of humanity is about the same as I know. A whole shoal of herrings, in the guise of prettiness, seems to have been driven into the bay of Burlington House, where he may catch them (with the hook of his eye) who lists. A herring is a fish, and man is the angler; but he is such a fool, that he does not fit the right bait on his barb. Mingled with the pretty girls are in their freshest toilettes (and smile so sweetly on you as you tread upon their trains); mingled with the stout mammas who are so ready to feel faint, and who will not be averse from a visit to the ranean refreshment-rooms by and by); mingled with the world-old dowagers (from Peckham mainly, I should say, and

e-horse conveyances, driven by coachmen who are grooms and riders to boot); mingled with the old maids who have come up expressly from Cheltenham or Tunbridge Wells to see the pictures (whose aspect is, as a rule, as vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes): mingled with all these is a collocation of curates and country gentlemen; of surgeons who have snatched a few hours' day to see the exhibition; of people with small independences; of red tradesmen who have had their portraits painted by rising artists, and are in hopes that their effigies have found favour in the eyes of the Hanging Committee; Americans whose stock of letters of introduction has run out, and who find themselves somewhat lost in London; and art-loving lawyers (I have even known attorneys who had a taste for tall copies and illuminated rubrics) who have found time between the issuing of a writ and the entering of a judgment to hurry to Piccadilly and have a peep at the pictures. It is an honest, a genuine, a *paying* crowd, who have all fully disbursed their shillings at the turnstile, and have disbursed their twelpence for their catalogue, unmurmuringly. The non-paying crowd—the people who 'come in with orders'—were here Friday last, on private-view day, when they were followed about by the Academicians, and toadied: a compliment which is not paid to the people who pay. Therefore, Eugenius, do not look on the Monday in May, and on the site of the Lord of Burlington's town palace, for the Brahminical classes or the *blasé* orders. You meet with no princes or princesses of the blood; with no duchesses with no demireps (how is it that Naughtiness manages to wriggle itself in everywhere?); with no dandy guardsmen, no bishops and deacons, no M.P.s, no ambassadors, no Hindoo Baboos, and no newspaper critics. The most aristocratic members of the throng are the Academicians, who may have friends or customers present to whom they are anxious to point out the masterpieces on the walls. Your R.A. has always an eye to business, and never misses a penny.

Can there be any discontented people in the joyous Monday after? Alas, I fear that I spoke hastily when I qualified the crowd as cheerful, smiling, happy. Black Care is here—where is *atrazine* not?—stalking about, gloomy and saturnine, and burying his head ever and anon in his breast to take a furtive bite at his heart. I treat you to look at Benvenuto Styx, realistic painter. The ill-natured declare that Styx's Christian name is Benjamin; but a fictitious ill-nature!—those who are wedded to the Art Idea are entitled to do what aspect they please of art form: if I have an ugly pea-green coat, am I not entitled to dye it a heavenly ultramarine? and Benvenuto is surely a prettier appellation than Benjamin. The worst of it is, that Styx's intimates will persist in dubbing him Ben. The artist is in a rage; less because the committee have declined to

hang any one of the seven works of art he confided last April to the care of the Academy porters, than because Pyx's picture (Boadicea Burning the Birch from which she had Suffered) is on the line; because Wyx has got a capital corner for his charming view of Puddle Dock and the Gas Works, with the *Times* office in the distance; because there are no less than four numbers attached to Nyx's name (a mere landscape-painter) in the catalogue. Miserable Styx! He will go to the Charon Club to-night, and abuse Cerberus the waiter. To-morrow morning, when poor Miss Buff the model calls to sit to him for the figure of Faustine (after Swinburne), Styx will scold her savagely, and give her nothing but bread-and-cheese and ginger-beer for lunch—when he is in a good-humour, and the papers have spoken favourably of his productions, he regales his models with bath-buns, pork-pies, and Capri Secco, that pleasant Italian wine. It is not good to look upon Benvenuto Styx on this first Monday in May. His scowl is only one whit less awful than his withering sneer. He folds his arms, and snorts a blighting blast of complete disparagement of all and everything. 'Watts! *ne lui en parlez pas*. Leighton! if ever there was an over-rated man, that pretender is the one. Millais! well might Ruskin say, "This is not fall, it is catastrophe;" but the tidal wave of incapacity has set in now, sir. Barnes! who is Barnes? Leslie! he had a clever father. Orchardson! he is retrograding. Poole! he must be suffering from strabismus. Poynter! we've had enough of this kind of thing—Egypt and the Ibis, and the Pyramids, and all that. Walker! it is a pity he ever gave up drawing upon wood. Frith! well, you know: as for Frith, nobody talks about him, nowadays. A fatal man in art, that Frith, sir; a fatal man.' I wish to goodness somebody would take Benvenuto Styx downstairs, and give him some beer. He will choke himself else with inward churning venom.

Unfortunate Ben! he cannot help it. *Tantène animis celestibus ire?* In his case most assuredly an answer to the query may be given in the affirmative. Benvenuto Styx lives at Rafaelle-place. He is a Rafaelite to the backbone, to the last joint of the caudal vertebræ, to the innermost particle of the spinal marrow. Rafaelle-place has, these many years ago, proclaimed deadly warfare, war to the knife, with St. Guido's-wood; and of that Wood one of the most conspicuous representatives, Claridge Mivart, Esq. R.A., is standing close to the atrabilious Styx, and is rapturously praising a picture (Pharaoh's Daughter tickling a Scarabæus) by Mr. E. J. Poynter, R.A.

Look on the two men. The contrast is marked, and somewhat melancholy. Styx, you can discern at a glance, is poor. He is somewhat dandified in his dress—they used to call him Beau Styx—and sometimes Fiddle Styx in Rome; but his attire is in what is slangily termed—and the definitions of slang, although repulsive,

eldom erroneous—'bad form.' A stout, thick-set, blue-eyed, -shouldered gentleman, a freeborn Englishman to boot, and ed to cry, *Primum, si noluero, non respondebo; quis coacturus* may certainly wear, if it so please him, a shooting-jacket and of brown velveteen, and a flaming scarlet necktie under the t of turn-down collars, checked pantaloons somewhat short e leg, lace-up boots with thick soles, and a soft felt hat with d brim. I don't say that such a garb, under certain condi- might not be striking and picturesque. But those conditions anting in the attire of the friend whose portrait I am drawing. brim of the felt hat is battered, and there is something the r with its crown; the flaming red tie fails to harmonise with most equally flaming and shaggy red beard immediately above e shirt-collar might be a leaf from the original copy of the *Albus* preserved in the Guildhall library, for it is wofully stained; the velveteen coat is much smirched, and has gone at the seams; and at least three buttons are lacking to the

Moreover, Benvenuto persists (in hatred to the St. Guido's-people, whom he terms the 'lavender-kid school') in not wear- loves; and his hands—well, the nails *do* disclose more frequent gs with the palette knife than with the scissors. Finally, hangs about Ben a vague odour of a certain beverage called er'—something in the malt and hops line, I fancy—and an stakable fragrance of the very strongest bird's-eye tobacco. should it be otherwise when our good friend smokes all the he is painting, and slakes his thirst exclusively (and frequently) 'cooper' from the pewter?

Now let him scowl and growl forth grim censure, and turn to the site being beside him. Claridge Mivart, Esq. R.A.—he is the yest of the forty; is tall, slim, elegantly moulded, and in face emi- y handsome. His glossy chestnut hair is parted down the middle. fact can easily be verified, as he has taken off his hat five times n the last ten minutes, in order to salute some acquaintances he ecognised in the crowd. His sleek moustache lies on his cheek ly and compact as a mussel-shell. He has the trimmest of ers; he has allowed Poole or Smalpage to dress him; and or Smalpage has taken delight in the task. His lavender kid s (Benvenuto had right on his side in his scathing sarcasm) fit ike a second skin. If Runciman did not make his dainty kid with the varnished toes, Runciman might have done so, and d in them. A half-crown bouquet beams in his button-hole; he fingers of the pretty girl at the florist's in Piccadilly, who the posy in his coat, trembled as they adorned the handsome, ng, happy dandy. For he is very happy indeed, is Claridge rt, R.A. Give me an income ranging between four and five and a year, with a profession I love, and in which I excel; give

me lords to pat me on the back, and a bevy of fair women to flatter and a swarm of parasites to fawn upon me and feed at my sumptuous table, and I will undertake to be as happy as a sandboy. Are sandboys really happy, I wonder, and postboys jolly, and smugglers bold, and music-hall singers great?

Both these men are artists—painters; and the sole source of income to both is the sale of the pictures they paint. Both had in the first outset nearly equal chances; for to do the Academicians justice, when a picture by a young artist is submitted to them, the council and the hanging committee care very little whether the artist be an Oxford double-first, who, seduced by the Ruskinian example, has thrown the classics to the winds, and ‘gone in’ for the fine arts, or a house-painter’s apprentice, who six months ago was daubing the sashes of a window with boiled-oil and white-lead. I don’t think that a note of recommendation from a bishop or a college don would help an aristocratic or incapable artist much with the hanging gentlemen: so long as the patricians and the plebeians remain obscure the stage is clear, and there is no favour; it is only when the painter becomes Known that he becomes aware of the existence of such qualities as jealousy and partiality among the judges who are to decide whether his picture shall be hung on the Academy walls or not. What is this, after all, but human nature? Do you think that if I were a royal academician, and painted cows to the life, I would give a place on the ‘line’ to the works of that impertinent fellow Jones, who lives at Walworth, and isn’t even a member of the Arts Club, but who happens to excel in the very branch of art which I have been professing for forty years? Why, the upstart isn’t five-and-twenty yet. Away with him! I feel as the old-established image-workers of Ephesus felt towards a stranger who proved himself more cunning than they in the art of chasing. ‘Let him go and excel elsewhere!’ cried the silversmiths-in-ordinary to Diana of the Ephesians. And he went, or it grew hot for that chaser.

Both are painters, as I have said; yet a gulf socially wider than that of Mexico divides them. Styx is on the wrong side of forty; Mivart is on the right side of thirty. The first, strive to soften down the term as much as ever you please, is little better than a picture-dealers’ drudge. Very seldom does he obtain a commission. How should he? He knows no lords, no bishops, no dilettante and philanthropic dowagers, no wealthy Manchester cotton-spinners, nor Leeds clothiers, nor Glasgow shipbuilders—those great patrons of art. He knows nobody, save the Bohemians his comrades, his landlord, and his colourman, who dun him, and the dealer—the pitiless, penurious dealer, to whom his pictures are generally pawned before they leave the easel, to whom they are always mortgaged three days after they have hung on the Academy walls, if indeed they are lucky enough to attain that exalted position. This

all Styx's pictures have been rejected, and he is in debt to Mr. Montagu Capulet of Old Buck-street, W., in the sum of two hundred and eight pounds. Montagu Capulet will never sue him for the money; he is aware that there is yet plenty of 'meat' upon the painter. He will only 'sweat' him. Styx never had any patron except Mr. Capulet of Old Buck-street. When he went to Rome, he borrowed a hundred pounds from an insurance-office, and he is paying off the money by instalments. When he is behindhand in his payments, Mr. Capulet helps him with the necessary cash; and he is good enough to take the care of Styx's life-policy for him. When Mrs. Cornerbox, a healthy pawnbroker's widow, came up from Ipswich to view the exhibition of the Society of British Artists in Suffolk-street, and was struck with Styx's picture of 'Mary Queen of Scots winding her Watch on the Night previous to Execution' that she straight-purchased it for a hundred and fifty guineas, do you think that she didn't feel as though he were having a double-tooth extracted at the lenitives of chloroform or the freezing process when he agreed to hand over Mrs. Cornerbox's cheque to Mr. Capulet, taking in exchange from that gentleman an I O U for thirty-seven pounds twelve and sixpence, money lent on the security of Queen Anne and her Watch? Do you wonder after this that the poor fellow loves Claridge Mivart and St. Guido's-wood and all its belongings?

Although people call Styx a Bohemian, because his coat is shabby, and because he doesn't wear gloves, because he smells of beer and drinks 'cooper,' he works nine hours a day, and pays his rent as well as he can. The beer he drinks doesn't make him drunk, and the only effect produced upon him by a moderate quantity of gin-and-water at night is to cause him to cry, and to murmur, *inche io son pittore;* or perchance, if he be in vehement vein, to recite Marino Faliero's curse, and devote St. Guido's-wood to the fernal gods as a Gehenna of the north-western postal district. He is at Mivart. He has been the spoilt child of art and of fortune. The hands of life have been as diamond-dust to him, sparkling as he passed. He has been cloyed with caresses from his cradle up.

As a boy he was a prodigy, drawing with ease and grace, and he could write; lisping two or three languages before he could speak his own; playing the fiddle 'like an angel,' like William in *the-eyed Susan*, before he could do a sum in simple addition. He was always having patrons. The Dowager Countess of Mivart got him a presentation to Shambleborough High-school, where he obtained an exhibition, and went to Oxford. He left without a degree—art being a jealous mistress; but it was Lord Montagu, one of the wealthiest of our connoisseurs, who paid the man's college debts (he was rather rapid at Oxford), and sent him to Rome. He didn't live in mean lodgings in the Via del Corso; he didn't feed at the evil-smelling cook-shops behind the

Pantheon; he didn't pass his evenings at the Caffè Grecco over pipes and the small-talk of the studios, I promise you. Claridge Mivart had handsome rooms in the Piazza di Spagna; he drove his dog-cart on the Pincian Hill; he was presented to the Pope; he was of every ball and supper given during the season; he escorted our fair countrywomen to see the Coliseum by moonlight, and the statues in the Vatican by torchlight; he was a member of the Roman Club and the Roman Hunt; and he was hand-and-glove with at least two cardinals, a host of monsignors, the general of the Jesuits, and all the Guardia Nobile. His studio was one of the most fashionable lounges in Rome; and ere he left the Eternal City, the Duke of Melipotamus had purchased his picture of 'Circe threatening to make her Pigs into Pies;' while General Zachariah K. Picklestickle, U.S.A., had become the proud possessor of 'Cymothoë and the sea-green Train,' a lovely piece of colour; and Prince Schovelemoff, of the Russian Imperial Guard, had commissioned Mivart's *chef-d'œuvre* of 'A Vestal Virgin endeavouring to revive the Sacred Fire.' You remember that grand work, and how exquisitely the bellows were handled?

Rome, Venice, Verona, Pisa, Florence, Milan, Germany, Spain, the East—Mivart made the grandest of grand tours, journeying indeed through Palestine with that charming young Marquis of Camelshair, who has since married a daughter of the Grand Lama of Thibet. He came back to be courted, caressed, and patronised more intensely than ever. His subsequent career we all know. He was classed an associate well-nigh by acclamation, and became a full-blown academician with as much vivacity as an ensign and lieutenant in the Guards becomes a captain. He is of the Pericarditis Club and the Kemble Club and other distinguished *cenacles*. He has been presented at court, of course. During the season it is seldom indeed that the *Morning Post* appears without chronicling his name as a guest at some splendid gathering. He will be knighted some of these days; if, indeed, he should care to accept that somewhat *roturier* dignity. Meanwhile he lives gorgeously, and his pictures fetch a thousand pounds apiece and upwards.

Why should there be this vast, this appalling difference between the two men? They are both competent masters of their art; they both use the same brushes, and paint on the same canvas with the same descriptions of pigments. The same models sit to them; nay, there is often a similarity between the subjects they select for their pictures. If Mivart takes up Circe, it is as likely as not that Styr will be busy with Ulysses; and in the very same year that the latter exhibited his 'Queen Mary winding up her Watch' in Suffolk-street, did not Mivart send his 'Elizabeth mending her Pen previous to signing the Death-warrant of Mary Stuart' to Trafalgar-square? I don't think that Claridge painted any very much better than Benve-

unto. Why should one be a Brahmin, and the other a 'Bohemian'? Well, there are such things, you know, as chance and fate and luck, and ingenuity in availing oneself of opportunities; and there is likewise the art of missing one's opportunities. And then, to be sure, that blundering Benvenuto, when he was but twenty, married a ballet-girl at the Theatre Royal Little Turnstile, simply because her hair was like that of the Monna Lisa in Lionardo's picture. As he is blonde and he is a little more than auburn, of course (as must happen with married people of the same complexion) she bullies him. They have seven children, and live, I am afraid, somewhat of a cat-and-dog life.

Modern readers are really such an exigent and captious generation, that I should feel little astonishment were I to hear you complaining that I have been detaining you all this while over the portraits of two painters standing side by side in a room at Burlington House, instead of conducting you first to Rafaele-place (which is not a hundred miles from Beaucherc-square), and subsequently to St. Guido's-wood, which, unless the topographers tell fibs and the maps of (Imaginary) London are a delusion, is in very close proximity to Toneril's-road, Regan's-park (I beg Mr. *Punch's* pardon if I have stolen the title of a locality from him). You dear, kind, ingenuous reader, I have been talking about Rafaele-place and St. Guido's-wood all the time during which I have been ostensibly discoursing upon Benvenuto Styx and Claridge Mivart. *Ex uno disce omnes*. They were each one of them types, and from each shall you tell the characteristics of his *confrères*. There are fifty Styxes in Rafaele-place, and a dozen Mivarts in St. Guido's-wood. Pray remark the numerical distinction.

If I need confirmation for this statement, I can only appeal to Miss Buff; for she is a bond of union between the two artistic districts, and she sits as willingly, although not so frequently, to the Bohemian near Beaucherc-square as to the Brahmin yonder by lordly Regan's-park. She is behind the scenes of both theatres pictorial, and could tell you, if she chose, some of the queerest stories imaginable concerning British art and artists in the nineteenth century; but she is discreet, and keeps her own counsel. Emily Buff, aged twenty-seven, is one of those very little-understood professionals called a model. Novelists, lady novelists especially, are very fond of seizing on the artist's model as a type, and produce all kinds of impossible monsters, which they endeavour to palm-off on a confiding public as a genuine *poseuse*. Listen to me, and you shall know what the actual (Imaginary) model is like. Emily Buff is a widow. She is properly 'Mrs.,' but elects to revert to her maiden prefix. Her husband was a frame-maker and 'mounter' of water-colour drawings, and died young. She tries her hardest to carry on the business, and her husband's old customers do their

best to support her; but when trade is dull and times are hard, she 'sits.' The keeper of the Royal Academy is very pleased when he hears that Miss Buff is disengaged, for the beauty of her figure is a tradition in the life-school; and a sensible model, who foregoes pork-chops for supper and doesn't drink malt liquor—they *will* drink it unfortunately, poor things—may keep her figure until she is past forty. Flaxman had a Psyche who was fifty-one. The model's head does not in the least matter: that can always be idealised. But there are certain undulations of the form, certain conditions of muscularity, which no canons of symmetry and proportion can exactly teach; and the sculptor or the figure-painter who works without a model begins with a foundation as imperfect as a surgeon who studies anatomy from a plaster cast or a wax figure instead of from the dead 'subject.' Miss Buff has been the live 'subject' for scores of famous works. She is a Nymph at a drinking-fountain in Nineveh-square; she is one of the Three Graces down at Lord Boomerang's place in Kangarooshire; she is Fame blowing a trumpet behind the recumbent figure of General Sir Giles Jolter, G.C.B., a Waterloo veteran interred in the cathedral at Old Sarum; she is Patriotism sitting at the base of Sir Poppie Dhoolei's statue (that distinguished Indian civil servant) on the Esplanade at Punkahpore in the East Indies; she was M'Guilp's Electra; she was O'Donto's Lucrezia Borgia; she has been Dorothea, Eurydice, Queen Elizabeth, Marie Antoinette, Jane Shore, Dolly Varden, Calliope, and Diana Vernon; she has been the bust of her most gracious Majesty (Townhall, Jiggsborough), and the hands and arms of the beautiful Mrs. Rousby. She has sat to nearly all the academicians; and, quoth the veteran animal-painter, Kylvie Longifrons, R.A., 'How I wish that Emily was a Cow! What a lovely reclining figure she'd make in a meadow, illumined by the rays of the setting sun!' The grandees of art pet the simple little woman (in whom there is not a grain of harm, although she passes much more of her time out of her garments than in them), and make much of her when she comes to sit. She always has lunch at Claridge Mivart's when she goes to sit; and even that awful Lady Buskinsock (wife of Sir Epictetus Buskinsock, historical painter in ordinary to the Grand Lama of Thibet, whose daughter the Marquis of Camelshair married) condescends to regale little Buff with tea and muffins. She gives her tracts sometimes, which Emily reads through; and her ladyship was so delighted at hearing a complete summary of the contents of that moving opuscle of *Night-duty and Temptation, or the Penitent Policeman*, that the next time Buff came to sit to Sir Epictetus (she was the Mistress of the Robes in his grand picture of the Coronation of the Wagshum of Halicarnassus) she presented the model with a new French-merino dress. 'For one pursuing so peculiar a calling—but necessary, my dear, in the cultivation of that art of which Sir Epictetus is so

distinguished a professor—I must say'—thus Lady Buskinsock—'that Miss Buff is a very well-conducted young person, and has my entire approval.' My lady's interlocutor was Miss Phylacks, of the Pharisee Mission and Dejected Needlewoman's Home, Leather-lane. Miss Phylacks does not approve of models, nor do her notions of high art go beyond pictures of charity-children bawling anthems. 'I've no patience with such shameless creatures,' says Miss Phylacks stontly. 'I'd have them all whipped, I would, the hussies!'

Reader, would you like your sister to be an artist's model? Well; you shudder, you turn pale, or you redden with anger at the suggestion of such a thing. Well; you are ready with your cheque for a thousand when Mivart sends you home his picture of Aspasia rallying Socrates.' Would you like your sister to be a ballet-girl? You start with horror. Do I mean to insult you? Why, man, you drove in your brougham this morning to the box-office of the Theatre Royal Little Turnstile, to take stalls for the first night of the new burlesque extravaganza of the *Thousand-and-no Nights, or the Sultana Scheherasade bowled out*. Mr. Alfred Thompson has designed the costumes, and the stage will be filled by half a hundred sylphs in pink tights, all dancing catch-'em-who-can till the gunpowder runs out of the heels of their boots. When the surgeon comes to lance our gum-boil, do we trouble ourselves much about the laborious, the tedious, the sickening training he has gone through before he has become qualified to perform that simple operation? Do we care to remember that he must have made five hundred cuts in a corpse before becoming fit to make one incision in a living body? This is an era when the necessity for technical education is being much dwelt upon. The ballet-girl and the model are very technical indeed. Let us respect the technicalities. *Non ragionam di lor; ma guarda, e passa.*

Miss Buff glides noiselessly between Rafaele-place and St. Guido's-wood—between the gorgeous palaces and the poor hovels of art. The most noticeable embarrassment the harmless nymph ever underwent, was when it occurred to the vivacious Monna Lisa, Mrs. Benvenuto Styx, to become desperately jealous of Buff when she sat to Ben as Clytemnestra in his grand work of 'Agamemnon giving his Goose cooked.' For an entire morning—Styx had judiciously, or injudiciously, shot the bolt of the door—did Monna Lisa keep her eye at the studio keyhole. At last she could stand it no longer; the frail portal gave way to a vigorous push, and Mrs. Styx rushed into the studio, 'raised Cain,' and broke things. She overturned Benvenuto's easel, and smudged the wet colours on his canvas. The unhappy Clytemnestra—there could not have been any room in it, since she was fully robed à l'ancienne Grecque—fled, hastily pursued into the hall, where she fell down on the oilcloth. When Mrs. Styx tore her peplum, and expressed a passionate desire

to tear her eyes out. I have heard, but I have no positive information on the subject, that the midnight (and sometimes the midday) glass too oft did come 'twixt Mrs. Styx's finger and her thumb.

Did Miss Buff retail a word of this deplorable transaction, when the next day she went to sit as a Spanish gitana to Podrida the renowned painter of Andalusian subjects, who has built that charming villa for himself, the 'Vista Alegre,' at St. Guido's-wood? Did she say a word about it to Jack Bladderkuller, Benvenuto's own next-door neighbour in Raffaele-place? Not one. She did not even mention the unpleasant occurrence to her old colleague and ally Joe Flexor, formerly of the Life-guards Blue, subsequently Professor Flexorini, director and posture-master of a *pose plastique* company, and afterwards, for a length of years, classical, theological, and poetical model to the Royal Academy, and the members of the old and new Water-Colour Societies. Joe is getting somewhat too rigid in his muscular development to be eligible as Young Lochinvar, Sir Galahad, Gil Blas, or Apollo; but he is still a capital Hercules, an unrivalled Brian de Bois Guilbert, and a Henry the Eighth (with a little padding) not to be excelled. When he is old, he will let his beard grow, and earn an honest crust as Moses on the Mount, Samson among the Philistines, Merlin the enchanter (Miss Buff with her hair down will be Vivien), or Galileo languishing in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

And so we have all different grooves in which we slide. The wheels of the sumptuous Mivart chariot fit the sunken tram of St. Guido's-wood excellently. It is the most charming pictorial *villeggiatura*, you may rest assured. The majority of the brethren of the palette who reside there are freeholders, and have built their own houses. Podrida's mansion, the Vista Alegre, I have already glanced at. It is constructed in the Mexico-Iberian style; has a *patio* or courtyard in the centre, with a copy of the Lions fountain in the Alhambra, and quite a grove of orange-trees in tubs. Tom Matterhorn, A.R.A., our facile Alpine painter—you remember his 'Grands Mulets: Influenza coming on'—has erected in Righi Culm-road, St. Guido's-wood, a delicious Swiss *chalet*, with a gallery outside, in which Mrs. Matterhorn—there is a garden round the *chalet* notwithstanding—sits and does crochet-work. They say that Tom has substituted the *ranz des vaches*, wound on a horn, for the dinner-bell; and his friend Bomberzine the *genre* painter has circulated a report that all Matterhorn's children are afflicted with goitre. He offended the painter of Helvetian nature dreadfully by asking him if he was licensed to sell wines and spirits. 'Why?' asked Matterhorn. 'Because you keep the Swiss Cottage, you know,' replied Bomberzine. There is a hostelry by that name not far from St. Guido's-wood. Bomberzine's witticisms are very mild; as mild per-

haps as Barrister's wit, which may be qualified as Joe Miller and gin-and-water.

Ogre the architect's Palladian villa, with the wall of its open loggia painted in fresco by Perugino Parkinson, that gifted young man, who copied all the frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa, subsisting meanwhile exclusively on parched peas and vermicelli soup; dashleigh the historical painter's Pompeian villa, with 'Salve' on the tessellated threshold, and 'Cave canem' on the door-jambs; Sir Pictetus Buskinsock's great Vanbrugh-looking mansion of red brick with stone dressings: all these are among the glories of St. Guido's-wood. The ladies of the married artists are beautiful and haughty; roughams abound in their domestic economy; *diners à la Russe* are habitually given; and the pastor of the district, the Reverend Claude Frolo, of St. Luke's chapel-of-ease, is a fanatical admirer of the works of Cornelius and Overbeck, and paints, himself, very prettily, in oils. His 'Gnostic Martyr sitting on a Pitchfork,' and that sweet head of his, 'Beatrice Cenci with a Chignon,' very narrowly escaped being hung in last winter's exhibition at the Dudley.

The painters who live in Rafaele-place, Beaucherc-square, are not freeholders. Nay, nor copyholders, nor, as a rule, leaseholders. They are yearly tenants, or even lodgers, dwellers in the dingy tenements of one of the dingiest streets in (Imaginary) London. At intervals in Rafaele-place there are shops: artists' colourmen, framemakers, old printsellers, photographic establishments, cheap cigar-shops, public-houses, and I am afraid more than one chandlery. The broker's man knows his way to Rafaele-place. The county-court bailiff is quite a familiar acquaintance there; and more than once has Benvenuto Styx, in the old days of arrest by *capias*, enjoyed the pressing but expensive hospitality of the Sheriff of Middlesex, as dispensed by his officer, Mr. Abraham Shoulderclap of Grim's-buildings, Vampire-lane, E.C. They talk of other things besides art in Rafaele-place. The conversation occasionally runs upon such prosaic topics as milk-scores and cheesemongers who have heavy bills to meet on Monday next, and who must consequently trouble Mr. Styx for that little account. Still—Miss Buff is my witness—cheerfulness, contentment, mirth and jollity even, sometimes prevail in that poverty-stricken colony. They are as happy over their pipes and beer—when creditors are not troublesome, and the county-court is tranquil—as the magnates of St. Guido's-wood over their perumed cigarettes and their Cabinet Steinwein.

But it is all Imaginary. The world of art is quite a different sphere from that which I have striven to picture. Claridge Mivart, R.A., is a totally impossible character; and the class of painters of whom Benvenuto Styx is a type have long since been extinct.

MILK-AND-WATER-COLOURED ELYSIUM

ISAAC TAYLOR offended conventional orthodoxy in more than one or two passages of his *Natural History of Enthusiasm*. One of these exceptionable passages, in a work which conventional orthodoxy would otherwise have so gladly claimed for its own, and commended as safe reading for the serious, of either sex and of all ages—one of these flies in the ointment, these spots on the sun, these didactic detrimentials, was where the contemplative author gave vent to his contempt for current notions of what constitutes heaven. There was once a little girl who lamented that the only use of being good was, that after death she would sit and sing hymns on a damp cloud. What Isaac Taylor inveighed against was the 'sickly spiritual luxuriousness' which peoples heaven with 'a swarm of butterfly youths,' in accordance with its 'poetic notion of angelic agency.' His *Physical Theory of another Life* vigorously expounds and elaborately expands the positive side of his anticipations of a future state—its exhaustless employments, its illimitable interests, its ever-progressive demands on the highest processes of the intellect, as well as its plenary satisfaction to the uttermost range of the affections.

It is justly held to be always interesting to compare the various estimates of a state of future happiness which various minds will form—estimates that have differed much in different ages and races of mankind, from the Houri of the Mahometan to the hunting-ground of the Mohawk. In England, one of these comparative studies reminds us, it is the custom to 'tell little boys that heaven will be very like constantly going to church, only that there will be a great deal more singing.' It stands, if not to reason, certainly to common experience and observation, that the little boy, meditating on the liveliness of the sermon and the beauty of the hymnody, 'feels that the prospect of an eternity of such enjoyments is'—well, say, not encouraging—

'Lieu saint, mais ennuyeux,'

as M. J. Chenier not too reverently defines the popular notion of *le paradis dont Céphas est portier*,

'où les neuf chœurs des anges,
Au maître du logis entonnant ses louanges,
De prologues sans fin lassent la Trinité,
Et chantent l'opéra durant l'éternité.
Rien n'est plus musical ; mais l'Elysée antique,
Malgré Chateaubriand, paraît plus poétique :
On s'y promène en paix sans flagorner les dieux ;
On y chante un peu moins, mais on y parle mieux.'

Dr. Channing protests against the prevalence of what he considers must be erroneous views of heaven; enumerating among others, all of which seem unfavourable to a strong impression of its happiness, the describing it as a stationary existence, without change or progressive ascent to superior virtue; as a wearisome monotony and endless round of religious services; as an utterly solemn abode, and one separated absolutely from the rest of the universe. Rica, the travelled Persian, in Montesquieu's *Lettres*, confesses that some descriptions he has seen and heard of the Christian Paradise are of a kind to make every one endowed with common sense renounce such a future. Harp-playing without a break in the performance might, he thought, be too much of a good thing. Landor makes Boccaccio complain of Dante, that, like his friends the painters, he seemed inclined to think the angels were created only to flagellate and burn us, and Paradise only for us to be driven out of it. 'And in truth,' adds Messer Giovanni, 'as we have seen it exhibited, there is but little hardship in the case.' Exhibited as, for instance, it is in Dryden's denunciation of

'the heaven their priesthood paints,
A conventicle of gloomy, sullen saints;
A heaven, like Bedlam, slovenly and sad,
Foredoom'd for souls with false religion mad.'

A caustic critic of the 'Angelic Spirits' in Gustave Doré's *Triumph of Christianity* thinks they serve to recall an irreverent saying of Goethe, that if all the people get to heaven who expect to do so, the place will prove less pleasant than is usually supposed; there being certainly but few even among 'the ministering angels' whom one would care to know upon earth, especially in any company where flaming wings cannot be worn with evening-dress.

Martin Luther, during the Diet of Augsburg, wrote home to his little son John a letter which an ecclesiastical historian owns to have read with more interest than all the five 'Confessions' presented to the emperor on that memorable occasion. The letter is an allegory on the nature and employments of heaven, and is said to illustrate one of his most serious opinions; which was, that the views commonly received among Christians, of the nature of the happiness reserved in a future state of being, if not erroneous, yet rested on no sufficient foundation, and were ill-adapted to 'allure to brighter worlds.' He thought, as Sir James Stephen expresses it, that the 'enjoyments of heaven had been refined away to such a point of evanescent spirituality as to deprive them of their necessary attraction.' Hence this allegory invented for the delight of little John Luther—with its minute material details of drums, crossbows, and horses with golden bridles and silver saddles.

We read of Goethe once telling a friend of his, that he had learnt one thing from all the talk then prevalent about Tiedge's

Urania; which was, that the saints, as well as the nobility, constitute an aristocracy. He said he found stupid women who were proud because they believed in immortality with Tiedge, and that he had to submit himself to not a few stringent catechisings and tea-table lectures on this subject; which, however, he managed to cut short by saying that he had no objection whatever to another existence in reversion, but prayed only that he might be spared the honour of meeting there any of those who so dogmatically taught it here below; for if he did meet any such, they would flock around him on all sides, exclaiming, Were we not in the right? Did we not tell you so? Has it not all turned out just as we said? And with 'such a conceited clatter in his ears, he feared that, ere six months were over, he might die of ennui in heaven itself.'

The honest soldier in *Zeluco*, who essays somewhat in Dame Quickly's fashion to comfort poor dying Hanno, assures him of 'glorious quarters' when he gets to heaven. 'I cannot tell exactly how people pass their time, indeed; but by all accounts there is no very hard duty, unless it is that you will be obliged to sing psalms and hymns pretty constantly; that, to be sure, you must bear with.' But upon the whole the soldier is convinced that poor Hanno will be as happy as the day is long in the other world all the rest of his life.

Harmony is obviously chosen, remarks Sir Walter Scott in his Diary, as the least corporeal of all gratifications of the sense; but they have a poor idea of the Deity, he adds, and of the rewards in store for the blessed, 'who can only adopt the literal sense of an eternal concert—a never-ending birthday-ode.'

Soph Johnstone, renowned in auld-warld memorials of Scottish life and character, once brought to an end an else endless theological argument with Dr. Hugh Blair, by the candid avowal, as regards the paradisaical state as it was in the beginning, and, by implication, perhaps as it may be again, 'Weel, weel, Doctor, it wad hae been sma' pleasure to me to rin about naked in a garden, eating green apples.'

The Professor at the Breakfast-table discourses incidentally on a goody book with a dreary title-page enlivened with a portrait of the author, one of those faces that small children loathe without knowing why, and which give them, he says, 'that inward disgust for heaven so many of the little wretches betray, when they hear that these are "good men," and that heaven is full of such.' In a more recent work Dr. Holmes introduces us to two austere old maidens, one of whom expresses a hope before her very unlike-minded niece, that the said niece may not, like her late father, come to an early grave, or, at any rate, that she may be prepared. There was no reason to suppose the girl was going out of the world at present; but she looked Miss Silence very seriously, and said,

'Why not an early grave, aunt, if the world is such a bad place as you say it is?' 'I'm afraid you are not fit for a better,' Miss Silence replies. And Myrtle wonders if Silence Withers and Cynthia Badlam are just ripe for heaven; and probably hopes that, if so, they may be exceptions rather than the rule, as regards the company there. It is of some such folks that Thomas Hood the elder exclaims, in one of his letters, 'And verily if they be the Righteous, I am content to be the Lefteous of the species.' Chamfort has a story of the Maréchal de Duras, who used to employ this effective menace against one of his sons, when the young fellow was perverse and rebellious. '*Misérable!* if you go on in that way, I'll send you to supper with the king.' *Le jeune homme* had, in fact, twice had the honour of supping with his most Christian Majesty at Marly, and found it so prodigious a bore, that at the prospect of another such evening he fairly collapsed. So it is with unhappy externs who cannot appreciate the beatitude of certain beatific visions. Mr. Coventry Patmore, in a certain Wedding Sermon, bids us beware of those who

'Lure to empty heights man's hope,
Bepraising heaven's ethereal cope,
But covering with their cloudy cant
Its ground of solid adamant.'

And there is suggestive import in what he puts elsewhere into a letter of Jane to Frederick:

'When Grace died, I was so perplex'd,
I could not find one helpful text;
And when, a little while before,
I saw her sobbing on the floor,
Because I told her that in heaven
She would be as the angels even,
And would not want her doll, 'tis true
A horrible fear within me grew,
That since the preciousness of love
Went thus for nothing, mine might prove
To be no more, and heaven's bliss
Some dreadful thing which is not this.'

Only second in power to one's cherished anticipations of elective affinities in the better land, are one's rooted antipathies and established aversions. It may be true that, even in moderation, and as the most respectable people hold their prejudices, we all trust in a higher transcendent state to be without them; and that nobody of decent feeling but 'looks forward to more than tolerating in another world the sight, and possibly the companionship, of persons against whom he entertains the strongest possible prejudice.' But too often the prevision of such companionship implies a forecast shadow on that life without a cloud.

Miss Menie Trotter, of the Morton-hall family, one of those aged

Scottish ladies whose portraits stand out in such bold relief in Lord Cockburn's *Memorials*, being asked by a friend, not long before her death, how she felt, replied, 'Very weel—quite weel. But ech! I had a dismal dream last nicht—a fearfu' dream!' 'Ay? I'm sorry for that; what was it?' 'Ou! what d'ye think? Of a' places i' the world, I dreamed I was in heeven! And what d'ye think I saw there? Deil ha' et but thoosands upon thoosands, and ten thoosands upon ten thoosands, o' stark-naked weans! That would be a dreadfu' thing! for ye ken I ne'er could bide bairns a' my days.' And the bairns would perhaps enter a corresponding protest against Miss Trotter's society; in the style, suppose, of Molière's objector:

'Je n'y veux point aller,
De peur qu'elle ne vint encor me quereller.'


Southey relates of the great mythological personage Baly, that Veeshnoo, when he dispossessed him of his impious power, allowed him, in mitigation of his lot, to make his choice, whether he would go to the Swerga, and take five ignorant persons with him who were to be his everlasting companions there, or to Padalon, and have five Pundits in his company. Baly preferred the good company with the bad quarters.

So the American Indian Haterey, who was taken by Velasquez after a desperate resistance, for which the stern Spanish commander condemned him to be burnt alive, and who made one memorable reply, pronounced by Prescott 'more eloquent than a volume of invective.' When urged at the stake to embrace Christianity, that his soul might find admission into heaven, he inquired if the white men would go there. On being assured that they would, he exclaimed, 'Then I will not be a Christian; for I would not go to a place where I must find a race so cruel.' The sottish dying negress in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* declares that the loss of her child drove her to drink; and that, now, drink she will, if she do go to torment for it. 'Mas'r says I shall go to torment; and I tell him I've got there now.' Uncle Tom asks if nobody has told her how she can go to heaven, and have rest, at last. 'I looks like gwine to heeven,' says the woman; 'ain't thar where white folks is gwine? S'pose they'd have me thar? I'd rather go to torment, and get away from mas'r and missis—I had so.'

Dean Ramsay quotes, not without as much sympathetic indulgence, and even zest, as may be compatible with his very reverend capacity, the case of the Scotch little boy, who, when told of heaven, put the question, 'An' will faather be there?' His instructress answered that assuredly she hoped he *would* be there. 'Then I'll no gang,' was the instant resolve of this anxious inquirer.—The successful author of *Blindpits* illustrates the like prospective aversion in the instance of poor Dods, the Scotch baker, lying on his

deathbed, and by no means disposed to trifle with sacred things, yet utterly indisposed to comply with his niece's importunities that he should accept the ministrations of Pettigrew, to whom he has a special dislike as an obtrusive pharisaical prig. Once she says to him, 'Uncle, I fancy if ye was to keek in at the door o' heaven, and see Pettigrew there, ye wadna be for gaun in?' 'It wad be matter for consideration,' cautiously replies the canny Scot. Later in the day he remarks to a friend, 'I've been thinkin' a' mornin' o' what lassie said. She said, "What wad I do if I saw Pettigrew in heaven?" Weel, I'm a great sinner—a great sinner; but if I do meet him there, he'll be different, and I'll be different, and maybe we'll can compluther, although it's no easy seein' how it can be. But there's ae thing: Peter'—meaning Pettigrew, not the door-keeping apostle—'Peter'll aye be for pushing ben, and I'll be mair than content to be just within the door; so we'll maybe no meet often.'

NICIAS FOXCAR.



MAY-DEW MORNING

DAWNING purple and red,
Morning pearly and gray ;
O, but the lark sang overhead,
And it lack'd an hour of day !

Wave and wave on wave,
So ebb'd away the night ;
The sudden sun its glory gave,
And all the world was light.

The meadows, flashing dew,
Each spread a jewell'd plain ;
And all the forest branches through
There glitter'd rainbow-rain.

Upon a land empearl'd
The shining morning broke ;
And beauty to an Orient world
Of glow and gleam awoke.

Forth, while the freshening breeze
Tangled the loosen'd curls ;
Forth through the diamond-dripping trees
Sallied the laughing girls.

Eager the joyous bands
Their pastime to begin,
To scoop the dew with rosy hands,
And dip the face therein.

Sacred this May-dew rite
The damsels love to share :
That makes the brightest eye more bright,
The fairest cheek more fair.

And O, their ringing mirth,
Their voices fluting sweet—
Youth's joy in all the joy of earth,
And heart for all things meet !

Sweet May-day, May-dew morn,
Its charms it ne'er can lose ;
While in its hours of beauty born
Beauty itself renews.

WILLIAM SAWYER





Staniland, del.

Edmund Evans, sc.

MAY-DEW MORNING.



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BREECH-LOADERS AND THEIR INVENTORS

lost works on the breech-loader attribute its origin to the inventive genius of Henry II. of France in 1540. It is astonishing to find a host of sportsmen, whenever they put pen to paper anent breech-loaders, perpetuating such a piece of absurdity. French works on the subject start from the same date, and eulogise Henry as the great inventor of the breech-loading system. Mr. Latham, of Wilkinson and Co.'s, the well-known gunmakers of Pall-mall, completely upset this fallacious theory in an able paper on 'Early Breech-loaders,' presented to the Royal United Service Institution; and he, as far as we are aware, is the only writer on the subject who has not taken it for granted that Henry II. did all that he is reputed to have done. For purposes of contradiction, Mr. Latham has selected the best work we have any knowledge of on the subject of firearms, and thus disposes of its statements in a summary manner:

'In one of the most elaborate and complete works on the subject of modern fire-arms, *Wilcox on Rifles and Rifle-practice*, published at New York in 1859, it is stated that "Henry II. of France was the inventor of breech-loading arms in 1540." The same assertion has been repeatedly made in French works on gunnery, though not in quite so unqualified a form; but the slightest investigation of the subject shows it to be an error. Breech-, or rather chamber-loading guns of the fifteenth century are found in many of the continental museums; and, to go no farther than the door of the Tower armories in London, we shall find a group of early cannon resting in the open air, among which are some very curious specimens of breech-loaders. In the museum of artillery at the rotunda at Woolwich there is a breech-loading pierrier, or paterera, of the time of Edward IV., in 1471. This consists of a directing-barrel, terminating in a square bar or frame of iron, and a separate loading-chamber, with handle, which was fastened in its place for firing by quoin or wedge of wood or metal.

'Guns of a construction very similar to this are to be found in the museum of this institution, and also at the Tower of London, having been recovered in 1836 from the wreck of the *Mary Rose*, which sank off Spithead on the 18th July 1545, in an engagement between the French fleet of 150 large and 60 small vessels, and the English fleet of only 60 sail, commanded by Viscount Lister, in the Great Harry. During the battle the *Mary Rose*, commanded by Sir George Hewes, was so overpowered by the weight of her ordnance that she sank, and the commander and crew of nearly 600 men were lost.

' But it may be suggested that it is only the invention of breech-loading for small arms that is implied in the passage I have quoted, and that these early cannon should be considered separately. Even with this qualification, I cannot admit that the claim is any better founded; for in the same year in which Henry II. of France ascended the throne, Henry VIII. of England died—a prince who was himself the inventor of many contrivances relating to fire-arms, and throughout whose reign the greatest attention was paid to the improvement of artillery and arms. In this reign brass cannon were first cast in England; and two foreign engineers in his service invented shells, or firework to break in pieces hollow shot, "whereof the smallest piece hitting any man would kill or spoil him."

' It is probably to the early part of Henry VIII.'s reign that we should refer the very curious pistol-shields, or "targetts sheilde with gones," of which many specimens exist in the Tower; but no examples of the kind have been found in any foreign collection.

' The shield is probably intended to protect the gunner in firing from the small loopholes of fortified places, called *meurtrières*, and the barrel generally occupies the centre of the shield, in place of the boss or spike, which is usually in this position. There is a small aperture covered with a grating in the upper part, for the purpose of taking aim, and a handle in the lower half enables the gunner to direct the weapon. A separate loading-chamber, containing the charge, is pushed in at the breech, and a cross-bar or frame, which turns on trunnions, is shut down and retained in its place by a spring or bolt, to secure it whilst firing. If you compare this plan with that of the breech-loading paterera, you will see how very simple is the adaptation of the method already in use for cannon.

' The principle of a separate loading-chamber, inserted at the breech and held in its place by a frame with wedge or bolt, having been tried and found successful, it only remained to apply the same contrivance to the harquebus or hagbut; and fortunately a very fine specimen in the Tower armory shows us exactly how this was done, and gives us the date of its manufacture, 1537. In this weapon the loading-chamber has a projecting piece above the touch-hole, to insure its corresponding with the pan of the matchlock, and is held in its place by a hinged door, which is sufficiently long to enable the chamber to be inserted and withdrawn. It is ornamented with the king's initials, and a rose crowned, supported by two lions. These are on the fixed breech, above the loading-chamber, together with the armourer's initials, W. H., and the date, 1537. Not only the ornament, but the accuracy of workmanship of this weapon is very remarkable. The bore of the chamber is .55, and of the barrel .535; and the greatest variation from these measurements I have found is only sixteen-thousandths of an inch. When we consider the rude tools which were in use at th

the accuracy both of the boring

and fitting of this early weapon is surprising, and in strong contrast with the workmanship of many arms of a much later date.

'A larger weapon of similar date and construction, said also to have belonged to the king, but of inferior workmanship, is in the Tower. This has a much larger bore, .79, and is furnished with a spring-bolt, as additional security to hold the hinge-piece. The barrel is 3 feet 6 inches long, and it is styled in the early catalogues the "fowling-peece" of that monarch.'

So that we find that Henry II. of France had no more to do with the origin of the breech-loader than Goodwin Sands with Tenterden steeple. In a previous article on the 'Sporting-gun,'* we stated that the 'hangge-guns,' or 'hand-guns,' introduced into England by Edward IV., were the earliest kind of gun known in this country. This monarch landed at Ravensburgh in Yorkshire in the year 1471, bringing with him 300 Flemings armed with 'hangge-guns.' Anderson, Lamb, and other writers place the date of the introduction of 'hangge-guns' into England fifty years later, at the siege of Berwick in 1521; though why they should have been specially invented for *that* siege we are at a loss to divine, any more than why Blunderstone Rookery was called by that name, when, as we are informed on good authority, rooks *never* frequented it. Dr. Watson says, that 'artillery was used from the time of Edward III., and purchased from abroad by all our successive kings.' But not a word do we gather about 'hangge-guns' at that period. Undoubtedly Henry VIII. can lay a better claim to being an inventor and improver of fire-arms, and notably the sporting-gun, than any other European monarch of whom we have any record. Stowe says that in 1521—Camden, 1535—great ordnance was cast by John Owen, the first cannon-founder in England. Very probably, therefore, Anderson and Lamb meant that the 'first cannon ever made in England' were used at the siege of Berwick.

The 'foreign engineers' spoken of by Mr. Latham in his paper from which we have quoted were Peter Bawd, a Frenchman, and maker of ordnance, and Peter Van Collen, a gunsmith of Flanders. Henry VIII. died in 1547, the same year that Henry II. of France ascended the throne. The breech-loaders left behind by the former are of different construction from those of the latter, and are of an earlier date; so that we are fairly at a loss to conceive how, or on what grounds, so many English authors persist in ignoring the claims of Henry VIII. to being an inventor, while they laud to the skies those of Henry II. of France.

In the Woolwich Museum there is also a breech-loading wheel-lock gun. The loading-chamber is similar to that of the matchlock arquebus in the Tower; but the wheel-lock has a most ingenious

* *Belgravia* for December 1871.

328 BREECH-LOADERS AND THEIR INVENTORS

safety-stop or spring, to prevent accidental discharge. It also has a tubular back sight, common enough in 1580. This weapon is a very fair instance of the manner in which interesting relics belonging to the nation are kept. It has been rubbed and scrubbed apparently by a well-meaning, no doubt, but ignorant charwoman, until all trace of the original workman's hand is lost. The stock has been replaced by one of *mahogany*—a wood not introduced into England for a score of years later; and as a valuable relic of antiquity it is utterly spoiled.

We now come to a very important custom practised in France in 1525, and in Flanders in 1515, which has exercised no unimportant influence over the advancement of the art of gun-making: we allude to the 'Knights of the Arquebus' in France, and to the meetings of the citizens of Flanders to compete for prizes. The Knights of the Arquebus were associations formed under the sanction of letters patent from the king, to practise with that weapon for amusement. The Flemish Arquebuseers were as renowned for their skill with that weapon in those days as their Belgian descendants are with the rifle in this epoch.

At St. Etienne, in France, there existed a manufactory of sporting-guns in 1535. But to the Germans alone belongs the indisputable fact of their inventing the rifle. Caspar Zoller, of Vienna, in the fifteenth century, is the man to whom tradition points as the originator of this weapon. Certain it is that the inhabitants of Leipsic, in 1498, possessed grooved barrels; and in 1520 Kutter's spiral groove was the best weapon of the day, and continued so for *three hundred years*. So that for three centuries the Germans undeniably possessed the best muzzle-loading weapon; and until very recently they had the only army in the world armed with a breech-loader. Kutter, Leuttman, Kühfuss, Reinagel, Druner, are names which, although only those of gunsmiths and inventors, have inscribed many a victory on the battle-flag of Fatherland.

The Belgian 'September meeting' now held annually on the plain of Linthout, at Brussels, is but a revival on a large scale of a very old custom on the Continent. The Germans had these meetings at Nuremburg in 1429, at Augsburg in 1480, and other places. Indeed, it is astonishing that so little credit has been given this nation for their determined perseverance and skill in perfecting fire-arms for war as well as sport.

Prizes for arquebus shooting were given in Switzerland in 1450. This has resulted in the annual *Tir Nationale* now held. The hardy chamois-hunters of Switzerland were long known throughout Europe as marksmen of the first order; and the pursuit of this wary animal, which called forth a far-throwing weapon, has had as much to do with producing rifles in that country as our *penchant* for the stables has enabled us to acquire good guns in England.

In France poor old Montaigne 'had hoped to see the day before died of the abolition of fire-arms.' Even in England, during the reign of Elizabeth, they were in no favour as arms of the chase, withstanding the reports which reached our island home from France as to the adoption of the arquebus in that country. Roger Ascham in 1589 wrote the best treatise on the bow that we now possess, or that has ever been written in any language, in which he advocates its use as a sporting weapon over the fire-arm. In Cromwell's time, Jervaise Markham admonished the government to 'rein in the bow 'at all hazards.'

A breech-loading trestle-gun (A.D. 1500) was hooked by an anchor to the Goodwin Sands about the end of last century, and is delineated in the *Archæologica Britannica*. In 1497 breech-loaders were used at the siege of Boppard in Germany; in fact, it was not an uncommon thing for bombardelles, hand-couleuvrines, harquebuts, and opettes to be loaded at the breech in those days. These weapons were made of strong iron barrels, from fifteen to fifty pounds weight, and stood on a stand, frame-work, or in a shaft or stock, and were fired by means of a slow match or piece of tinder. The breech mechanism consisted of a movable chamber with a vent, which, on the ball being forced in the barrel before the powder, was shoved in after it, and secured by a wedge and chamber-guard fixed to the barrel. Other guns constructed to load at the breech had leaf-valves and screws to take the place of a wedge. The leaf-valve was introduced by way of experiment into great guns some years ago, and proved, as it did in old days, a failure.

The inventions, as regards the breech-loader, brought to light in recent years are but resuscitations of earlier efforts in the art of gunnery. Tacitus wrote 2000 years ago that 'there is a certain natural rotation in human things,' which simply means that the world goes round, and that our ideas go round. And as history comes *obscure*, inventions fall into the 'sere and yellow leaf' along with it, until resuscitated, to again serve their turn, and again be discarded. It is not generally known that the Lefauchaux system of breech-loading, which was thought so astonishing by sportsmen a few years ago, as opening a new era for the readier destruction of game, was patented by Wright and Byrne, gunmakers of London, in 1752. This enterprising firm only resuscitated it, however, from what was known as 'the hinge-break to the chamber,' and applied it to trestle-guns in 1540.

Colt's revolvers were thought to be wonderful things when they appeared in 1835, yet, in point of fact, they were simply 'resuscitations.' In the Tower armory is a revolver of the sixteenth century, with four chambers, to be turned by the hand, and fired by a matchlock. Mr. Benet Woodcroft, the Superintendent of Patent Specifications, has said 'that five-sixths of the applications for pa-

330 BREECH-LOADERS AND THEIR INVENTORS

tents relate to old contrivances which have been patented over and over again.' Whether that is the case or not, it is a very singular fact, to say the least of it, that nine-tenths of the breech-loaders, old and modern, are all upon nearly identical systems. Gunmakers explain this by saying that there are only, after all, three ways of closing the breech. First, the barrel may be closed by a plug, or plunger, precisely as the mouth of a bottle is closed by a cork; next, it may be secured by a cross-piece, wedge, or bolt; and lastly, it may be secured by a tap, having an aperture movable on its axis.

Of course you find instances now and again of novelty and simplicity combined—Westley-Richards', for instance; but with the exception of the London gunmakers, and Rigby of Dublin, all the efforts of would-be inventors seem to be directed to solve the great problem of 'how not to do it;' or in other words, they attach modern complications to an old discovery, and thus aim at the coveted distinction of the term—*inventor*. It is a fact that speaks well for the intelligence of the general public, that their predilection for strength and simplicity has compelled the great gunmakers of the trade to keep perpetually on the *qui-vive*, in order to obtain such a desideratum on their premises; and it is only the plain truth when we state they have succeeded in doing so.

Amongst other weapons in the Tower is to be found a breech-loading gun of the seventeenth century, the mechanism of which we fancy, will be recognised in a modern 'resuscitation' now in the hands of the public. It is about four feet long, and has engraved on the barrel the following modest little trumpet-blast: 'Model of one of the projects of fusils. Composed and proposed by Le Sieur Balthazar, 1618, of the camps and armies of the king, attached to the suite of the minister of war. Executed by De Sainte.' The idiosyncrasy in this gun is to have a loading-chamber attached to the stock, instead of being movable, and the barrel slides forward to enable the charge to be inserted. This gun is one of the earliest of flint-lock known, though there is one other in the Tower four years earlier. Three other breech-loaders on the same system are also to be found there. In Pepys' Diary of the 4th March 1664 we read: 'There are several people trying a new-fashioned gun brought my Lord Peterborough this morning, to shoot off often one after the other without trouble or danger.' The good and pious Pepys, who scorned the idea of a bribe, but took presents *ad lib.*, seems for a while to have had no finger in this pie. Amongst other curiosities of breech-loaders in the museum at Woolwich is to be seen a revolving cannon, about the date 1630, bearing on it a German rhyme:

'Gotes hilf und unverdrossen,
Hat Mich Hans Reysinger gegossen,
Mann nent mich ein Buntzen in der Noth,
Wirt einer aus Mir troffen—heif ihm Got.'

Which, being interpreted, meaneth—

'By sheer hard work, and God's good aid,
Jack Reysinger this gun hath made,
In time of need a stout defence;
Who feels my shot—God help him thence!'

What is this but a mitrailleuse? Its length is three feet nine inches, and it has seven bores, about one and three-quarter inches in diameter, each of which has a vent with cover. It revolves on a collar at the centre, to which the trunnions are attached.

Truly there is nothing new under the sun. The witty and worthy citizen, James Puckle of London, who flourished in 1718, presented his invention to the powers of the time being—now called the 'authorities'—with a poetic effusion attached to it, setting forth that—

'Defending King George, your country and lawes,
Is defending yourselves and the Protestant cause.'

The use of his invention he farther stated was—

'For bridges, breeches, lines, and passes,
Ships, houses, boats, and other places.'

Upon examination, James Puckle's gun appears to us to be identical with the wonderful Gatling gun, about which we have heard so much recently. It has a central pin or screw, on which every set of chambers 'play off and on;' and he had a second set, ready charged, to be slipped on when the first set are pulled off for charging. In 1831 the Marquis of Clanricarde patented a plan of breech-loading, which consisted of a sliding loading-chamber, elevated to receive the charge, and secured by a wedge and lever, to hold it while being fired. Several pieces made on this plan were taken at Bomarsund by the British during the Russian War.

One would hardly credit the fact that the present Lefauchaux gun was introduced into England in 1837, by Mr. Wilkinson of Pall-mall, for sale, and that the two samples sent from Paris were 'despised and rejected' of sportsmen, and eventually bought as *curiosities* in 1844 by C. D. Scarisbrick, Esq., who, for aught we know, may have them now. Yet we find this system in 1854, ten years later, commencing to make itself known and appreciated—*sic tempora mutantur*. And this very Lefauchaux gun is on the same principle as that with which Henry II. of France shot in 1540, as the museum of arms of St. Etienne in France fully testifies to; and is now the popular weapon.

Respecting breech-loading actions—as the mechanism by which the breech is opened or closed is technically called—numerous patents exist. They may all, however, be grouped into two classes, known respectively as 'lever' and 'snap' actions. In the former system, the opening and closing of the breech is performed through

the agency of a lever, worked by the hand of the sportsman. In the latter, the opening of the breech alone is effected by the hand, and the locking mechanism is moved by a spring, the barrels being secured by the action of the spring, which replaces the catch, as it were, before opening. The lever plan is the simplest and strongest, while the snap-action is slightly more rapid. The numerous systems of snap-action would require a book to register them in, and by far the greater part have failed in hard work for want of power. Mr. Rigby of Dublin, who has gained a reputation second to none for his inventions and improvements in fire-arms of every description, has recently devised a snap-action which, from actual test, appears to us to have got rid of most of the objectionable features of other systems. For instance, it admits of the use of a strong side spring, and yet is easier closed than almost any other prior invention. Another advantage contained in it is, that the spring is outside the gun, where it can be easily cleaned, or if necessary replaced. Other plans on the same system have inside springs, which get rusted without being noticed, and cannot be replaced in the field when they do break. There is nothing concealed in Mr. Rigby's new gun; all is plain and above-board, and the most ignorant of tyros, as far as guns are concerned, can satisfy himself of the strength of the spring by ocular demonstration. Mr. Rigby, in other respects, has met a want long felt by sportsmen abroad, *i. e.* a good shot gun and rifle combined.

Old systems there were, to be sure, the most common of which was a double-barrelled shot gun, and rifled barrels to match the same stock, in one case. This was for muzzle-loaders, and it remained for Mr. Rigby to apply as equally convenient an arrangement to the breech-loader, by means of which central-fire breech-loading guns or rifles may be converted into small-bore or pea guns or rifles at will. This *multum in parvo* was a desideratum devoutly prayed for by votaries of Nimrod resident in India and other distant climes for many years, and is a boon that can only be thoroughly appreciated by those who have felt the want of such an invention. This transformation is effected by inserting at the breech end a small-bore tube, turned to fit inside the chamber and barrel. The same 'striking arrangement' may be employed to ignite the cartridges used in such small-bore tubes, and for the ordinary large cartridges for which the gun has been originally made; and the extraction of the small cartridge is effected by replacing the ordinary extractor by another suitable to the smaller bore. This important principle is equally applicable to single and double-barrelled guns. For many years, steel or iron gun-barrels have been drilled from solid bars, or punched and rolled, as well as welded. Such barrels as ordinarily manufactured have the grain of the metal running in a longitudinal direction, and are consequently less favourably disposed

to resist any bursting strain than welded barrels, in which the grain runs spirally. Mr. Rigby's improvement consists in heating the barrels before or after drilling, but while the hole is still unfinished, and twisting them on their own axes until the grain of the metal is drawn spirally round the bore to any desired angle. It is preferred to do this after the first hole has been made, and to hammer the surface lightly after twisting. It has been a constant source of annoyance to sportsmen that cartridges, when fired rapidly and by the hundred at a time—as, for instance, in a *battue*—will foul a breech-loading gun. In order to effect a diminution or prevention of fouling in the barrel, Mr. Rigby has checked this annoyance in a very *fons et origo*, by improving the cartridge. To effect this object, the inner surface of his cartridge case is formed with raised ridges on it, and is placed either at right angles or obliquely to the line of bore; these contractions are so placed that during the passage of the ignited gases from the cartridge into the barrel the harder and more adhesive portions are caught by and deposited on these ridges or contractions. The same object may be effected by attaching one or more metal rings or coils to the inner surface of the cartridge case, or so placing them in it as not to be forced out by the discharge. Mr. Rigby, in addition to these improvements in fire-arms, is moreover a *littérateur* of considerable ability in his own especial department.

Anaxagoras, Thales, Socrates, taught their disciples *viva voce*, not by writing. The same practice was observed by Pythagoras, as all the ancients testify, with this difference: that he took more care than the others that the secrets of his science should not be divulged. Galen assures us that the science of medicine was handed down by tradition. Cicero writes that all things in a state are not to be handed down by written laws; and the man who divulged the secrets of Numa was put to death for his rashness. Plato, like Pythagoras, as Joh. Pic. writes in his Apology, thought that whatever was most important in science should be taught *viva voce*, but not written. Ctesias the Pythagorean accused Hipparchus of revealing to the crowd the secrets of his science, and for so doing he was publicly expelled from his school. We all know the celebrated remark of Socrates on this subject. So that if gunmakers as a class followed the theories of these 'geniuses of ancient days,' we should still be in the dark as regards all relating to gunmaking.

Mr. Greener has shown, in his book on *Modern Breech-loaders, Sporting and Military*, that he at least has followed the advice of Epaminondas the Theban, who said 'that every subject had a handle, and if that be taken hold of, the subject can be well managed;' and right well has Mr. Greener handled his subject. Every kind of invention patented by his *confrères* has been fairly and honestly set forth in his book; he has 'nothing extenuated, or ought set down

in malice.' At St. Mary's Works, Birmingham, he has turned out many new inventions and improvements of his own in fire-arms, and also conducted a varied series of experiments in explosives, which at the present moment form the only reliable data to which sportsmen can refer on an emergency. Amongst others of Mr. Greener's inventions occurs one which is deserving of notice, as it has long been a desideratum—we allude to 'self-acting strikers.'

Land and Water thus concisely speaks of an invention which it believes 'to be a step in the right direction,' and which we subjoin: 'Instead of the strikers being worked by springs, as is usual in ordinary breech-loaders, he (Mr. Greener) works them with the hammers. There is a small hook on the breast of the hammers, which brings up the strikers clear of the cartridge at half-cock. The hammers are made to face with a free and effective blow upon the strikers. We observe the needles are much stronger than usual, and altogether the gun appears neat and durable, and the arrangement very simple.'

Mr. Greener, like most of his *confrères*, has contributed to our military arcana; but we think he stands *facile princeps* as regards his patent pencil-case bayonet, concerning which he writes: 'As the fore-end of the Martini rifle-stock is of little service except to protect the barrel, we make use of it for a bayonet-case. This bayonet can then be pushed forward and secured instantly when required, and except when wanted for use, it is kept in the stock like a pencil-case. When it is fixed, it is secured by a kind of nose-cap, which forms the end of the stock, passes round the barrel, and is attached by soft soldering or by a screw-pin. The handle is a knob which projects from the stock, and slides up the ramrod groove; it is secured by turning it on one side into a notch in the nose-cap, with the addition of a spring catch. When the bayonet is brought back into the stock, the knob is turned down flush out of the way. The ramrod is fitted on the side of the stock in this arrangement. There are several advantages in this plan—no bayonet-seaboard or frog, which very much incommodes the soldier in skirmishing is required; the rifle can still be made the regulation weight, with the bayonet included. This would enable the soldier to carry more cartridges, or a light spade, which will be necessary in modern warfare; this bayonet can be fixed far quicker than one of the ordinary kind, can be made stronger than the triangle bayonet, would resist a greater strain, as it lies closer to the barrel, and would be altogether more convenient, especially when skirmishing or in rifle-pits.

The clumsy weapon known as the 'sword-bayonet' has few advocates in the British army, as when fixed it utterly destroys the balance of the weapon. Its weight moreover is quite capable of bending a rifle when hot from rapid firing. In the navy a still more objectionable practice exists of fixing a cutlass on the top of the

rifle. An examiner of arms told us that when the rifles of a ship's company are returned into store, after one of her Majesty's ships is paid-off from a long commission, 'that as far as regards accuracy of shooting, it could not be expected from them; they were all more or less *deteriorated* by being either slightly bent, or spoiled in some way by excessive rubbing with,' he thought, 'sand and oil, to brighten them.' And that, as far as he saw, 'the best weapon for the navy would be a short thick brass blunderbus, which would admit of any amount of *polish*.' This *may* have been so. We can guarantee the fact, from personal observation, that in the present day our blue jackets are in all respects as well acquainted with arms as our militia, if not better. Mr. Greener's case illustrates the slowness of our Government to adopt inventions, although the utility may be more or less apparent to disinterested spectators.

In one of the campaigns of William III. in Flanders, a French regiment armed with the socket bayonet advanced against the 25th Regiment commanded by Colonel Maxwell, who ordered his men immediately to *screw* their antiquated bayonet into their muskets, the only mode our unfortunate soldiers then had of fixing bayonets. Great was the gallant Maxwell's surprise when the French, having arrived within a proper distance, threw in a heavy fire, which for a moment dumbfounded the 25th Regiment; recovering themselves rapidly, they charged the French, and drove them back upon their reinforcements. Mr. Greener's name is identified with the 'wedge-fast breech-loader,' an excellent contrivance for solidity and safety; the 'treble-grip breech-loader;' and has also much improved the manufacture of cartridges.

In Colonel Hawker's day the public at large were silent on matters connected with guns. The Volunteer movement has taken such vast information from the drill-shed, and made it interesting to the inhabitants of every hamlet throughout the length and breadth of the land, that gunmakers have turned authors in order to explain their inventions and show themselves well up in all the latest improvements in fire-arms. Mr. James Dalziel Dougal, identified with the 'lock-fast breech-loader,' has contributed largely to the literature of the sporting gun; and independently of that, his former connection with the *Field* and *Sporting Gazette* has given him a facility of graphic description worthy of emulation by any aspirant to literary fame in that specialty. It was from a practical knowledge of his subject, and the quick observation of many deficiencies in all varieties of guns manufactured on the breech-loading system, that instigated Mr. Dougal to invent the lock-fast gun. What he saw was requisite, was to draw the rear end of the barrels into corresponding annular recesses in, or upon equivalent projections on, the stock; and this was done by converting the hitherto fixed hinge-pin, on which the barrels play, into a movable eccentric key. The eccen-

tricity of this key's motion causes the barrels to play in and out from the stock, completely altering the whole construction and quality of a breech-loader, by permitting the ends of the barrels and the false breech 'to interlock with each other.' Hence the gun is termed the 'lock-fast,' a strictly proper designation. The locking power exceeds 1200 lbs. in the lightest fowling-pieces, and can be increased in proportion to the weight of the gun. At the International Exhibition of 1862, Mr. Dougal, in company with Sir William Armstrong and Colonel Colt, was awarded a medal for 'principle of construction.' The solidity of this system is beyond all praise, as by means of the sliding motion gained by the hinge being an eccentric key, of which the lever is a part, projections on the breech fit into the barrels and lump beneath, under the immense leverage, bringing the barrels and stock as solidly together as if one piece. This also prevents any tendency of the barrels to dip at the muzzle, as the lock-fast renders it impossible. The discs on the breech, fitting tight into the barrels, prevent upward motion in the slightest degree. The late Captain Forsyth, better known under his *nom de plume* of 'Black Buck' of the *Field* newspaper, than whom a more practical sportsman—with the exception of the 'Old Shekarry'—never gave his opinions in print, has left a record behind him in his *Sporting Rifle and its Projectiles*, which bears high testimony to this invention.

With regard to the activity of foreign over English inventors, Mr. Dougal assures us that as early as 1861 he saw no less than forty varieties in one manufactory at Liège. Since then, however, Mr. Dougal and his *confrères* have set to work to retrieve our British claim to originality, and at the present moment the strongest and best breech-loaders in the world are produced in England.

It is much more pleasing to the eye to view our progress in the art of making guns in 1872 than it is to look back upon the state of 'do well enough' in which Mr. Rigby depicts us as wallowing in 1851. In the *Practical Mechanic's Journal* for November 15, 1862, Mr. Rigby gives a graphic description of our 'National Armory' of small arms, as shown at the Exhibition, and thus speaks of the great step we had taken in eleven years: 'In 1851 an examination of small arms contributed by British manufacturers unmistakably revealed the fact that no change of importance in their form or construction, no invention of note, had been introduced during a period of thirty years, since the date of the final establishment of the detonating system instead of the flint. There was not a single breech-loading gun in the whole collection; and no proposal for breech-loading would be entertained by the leading manufacturers. There was not a military rifle worthy of the name, and military men ridiculed the idea whenever suggested of arming troops with a state of knowledge may be inferred from the fact that a Brunswick rifle, then used

ne of our regiments, was held up by those who led public opinion
 se most perfect form of rifle which had ever been invented.' As
 in this year of grace 1872, we are still without an Intelligence
 ument in our War Office, any more than at the period when
 Rigby wrote, it is not too much to infer that as regards foreign
 nations in gunnery, with the exception of that in the possession
 nglish gunmakers, little else is known. The *Military Review* for
 1852 thus descants upon what 'ought to be' in this country :

If the wealth of nations is based upon the industrial energies
 air peoples, the power and independence of a nation is no less
 ndent upon a healthy condition of its military institutions, and
 he excellence of the arms which it places in the hands of its
 ers.'

It is an ominous fact that our Indian sportsmen and officers—
 two terms are synonymous almost in people's minds — are
 e in accord with the views of the authorities as regards the best
 for the army. Experience and red-tape can never lie down
 her. In the 'Report of the Select Committee on Breech-load-
 Small Arms, 1868,' appears the name of a well-known firm of
 akers, Westley-Richards, rivals in years gone by to the well-
 n Joe Manton. This firm sent in two systems for trial in the
 petition to which all were exposed.

Rapidity of fire being one of the greatest and most important
 ties which a rifle can and must possess for a military arm, it
 ot a matter of wonder that this firm, with its vast experience,
 ld have produced the best weapon in this respect ; and it took
 first place, firing as it did twenty rounds in a minute (this
 was on what is known as the elevating-block system) ; another
 by the same firm taking third place for rapidity of fire on the
 g-block system, and was coupled with the Henry rifle, con-
 ted on the same method. The Martini rifle, on the elevating-
 k plan, took a second place. Yet, although Westley-Richards
 first and third places on both systems, and could easily have
 bined them, from his knowledge and success in both, the autho-
 s preferred a combination of the Martini, which took only second
 e for rapidity of fire, with the Henry, which tied with Westley-
 ards' third-placed rifle in the contest. And this, too, directly
 position to the expressed opinion of all practical gunmakers. The
 It has been, as any one conversant with military matters knows,
 flure, and that a most expensive one. This singular selection is
 he more inexplicable, as the Westley-Richards military rifle is, as
 ards breech mechanism, similar to the Henry, over which, too,
 as the advantage of possessing no delicate spiral-spring, but the
 nary mainspring used in locks. So that, on the score of economy,
 Government authorities have literally 'not a leg to stand upon.'

mer, striker, and tumbler are all in one piece, a great desi-

338 BREECH-LOADERS AND THEIR INVENTORS

deratum, giving, as such a remarkable combination should, immense strength and power of resisting wear and tear and rough usage in a campaign. It moreover has a safety-bolt, which answers the purpose of a half-cock, which the present military weapon is utterly destitute of.

The parts forming the mechanism are few, and of immense strength, being only fourteen in all, with seven pins, and such as could easily be repaired or replaced by a regimental armourer. We need hardly mention the notorious fact that at Wimbledon this rifle asserts its superiority every year. The bullet and rifling are upon Henry's plan, and as we have previously stated that it is similar to the Martini in appearance and construction, only superior in its simplicity, most people were at a loss to conjecture why the Government found it necessary to combine the Martini and Henry systems, when the Westley-Richards gun actually represented the best combined points of both those weapons. The result has proved the mistake made in overlooking a ready-to-hand and proved weapon like Westley-Richards' for an untried and unknown rifle.

The Westley-Richards action for double guns for sporting purposes has proved itself successful in every way, while their well-known 'express rifle' is a standing proof of success in all branches of their profession. We cannot here chronicle the numerous inventions patented by this old and well-known firm; but it is a simple act of justice to mention how near the army was to having in its hands a Westley-Richards rifle.

Mr. Daw, well known to the world as the inventor of the central-fire 400*l.*-prize cartridge, adapted to central-fire breech-loading guns, conferred a boon upon his country which can hardly be too much exaggerated, or too highly appreciated. As foreign governments saw from the first the necessity for procuring such a consummation of skill and dexterity as a central-fire cartridge, and offered large premiums for a good pattern, it is not to be wondered at that our own Government should follow suit, and, influenced by no parsimonious feelings on the score of economy, offer a reward of such a large sum (?) as 400*l.* to place us on 'a vantage-ground' in case of war with any belicose foreign state rash enough to meet us in the lists. It cannot but be a matter of gratulation to the inhabitants of our 'tight little, right little island,' surrounded as it is—fortunately for us—by its

'Zone of silver sea, narrow though it be,'

that a native should assert our superiority

'In arts, in arms.'

When the cartridge took the place of the powder-flask and shot-belt for sporting purposes, a great step in advance was made; and in connection with breech-loaders, that known as Lefauchaux became

desired substitute. It has been very popular and very successful, and will, no doubt, hold its own as long as the guns constructed with it are in use. It is true the Lefauchaux cartridges laboured under disadvantages which sometimes turned out sources of disappointment and annoyance to the sportsman. This cartridge, as almost every one knows, is exploded by the hammer striking an upright brass pin, the lower end of which communicates the blow to a small pin fixed in the inside of the base. Now if in packing, or the carriage in the field, or in loading, this pin got bent by accident out of its proper line, it became perfectly useless. No sportsman of even ordinary experience can have failed to notice 'miss fires' owing to such an untoward incident; but how much more serious such an incident would be in the presence of an infuriated tiger, can be better imagined than described. Mr. Daw has obviated such a contingency by inventing his central-fire cartridge, in which is no brass pin. The absence of this pin is, moreover, an element of safety to the sportsman, who has the reprehensible habit of allowing cartridges to lie about, where children and other ignorami might chance to get hold of them. The percussion cap is in the centre of the cartridge, and slightly below the base surface. By this depression, the base can be struck with any amount of force without the cap itself being touched. Here is a great element of safety; the cap must be actually struck by something resembling the piston of the central-fire gun before any explosion can take place. The interior of this elegant and simple invention is well worthy of description. In the centre of the base is a metallic cup, with a touch-hole drilled through the top. This cup is so attached to the base that it forms part of the base itself, the part with the touch-hole projecting forward inside, so as to be imbedded in the powder. A small four-grooved anvil, with a conical head, fits loosely into the cup, and upon this anvil is placed the percussion cap. It must be, patent to the most careless reader of this description, that when the hammer strikes, the cap explodes within the breech, and the flame darting down the grooves of the anvil—having only a few tenths of an inch to travel to the centre of the charge—instantaneous ignition is always the result. There is no escape of gas, no flash of the cap in the eye to glare upon it, or impair its accuracy for firing the left barrel at a wild November 'covey;' no danger of a piece of the copper flying off against the face. As far as the Government is concerned, they have reaped a double advantage in securing such a cartridge, for the simple reason that millions may be sent anywhere and everywhere without fear of an explosion.

Mr. Daw introduced his central-fire gun to the sporting world in 1861, and it presents to all appearance the well-known form of our discarded old muzzle-loader—*sic tempora mutantur*. O, shades of Hawker! fancy a nipple central-fire gun! The gallant Colonel Daw in 1822 issued his *Instructions to young Sportsmen*, in which he

strongly condemned anything set up as a rival to the old flint-lock gun. Yes; the Colonel gravely mourned 'that *every* gunmaker and almost *every* sportsman is so infatuated with the detonating or percussion system!' We have most of us heard of the Colonel's wonderful series of experiments 'Flint-lock *versus* Percussion,' out of which he extracted a verdict against the new intruder. Yet stay—what's this? 'In a very few years,' our gallant sportsman writes, 'the copper cap is now in general use for detonators, and it gives me satisfaction to see it.' In a very short time, when nipples were invented, and with all the *sang-froid* imaginable, the Colonel claimed the paternity of the invention, and that with all the courage and generosity of his noble nature. 'I set my wits to work,' says he, 'to simplify the invention. At last the plan of a perforated nipple and the detonating powder in the crown of a small cap occurred to me;' and on he goes, stating that the late Mr. Manton made the first nipple detonator 'precisely on my own plan.' We are told by him, that 'the whole job was done from my drawing;' and, furthermore, 'Thus Joe,'—meaning the renowned Joe Manton,—'thus Joe, who led the fashion for all the world, sent out a few copper-cap guns, and I know with some degree of reluctance.' The Colonel—peace be to his manes!—was not the only one connected with inventions who failed to 'render under Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's;' *on dit*, that Mr. Daw had great difficulty in satisfying the *gobemouche* known as red tape, that he was fairly entitled to his reward as the inventor of the central-fire cartridge.

The sporting gun has always led the way in gunnery improvements, the military arm following at a respectful distance. The percussion-cap was introduced into the army owing to a mere handful of Royal Marine Light Infantry saving a company of the 37th Madras Native Infantry from utter annihilation by a large force of Chinese braves, the Madras infantry being at a disadvantage from having the old flint-lock when in action. The Marines had been given percussion-guns as an experiment—and that, in the eyes of the Government, a doubtful one. Englishmen think nothing now of spending a shooting season in the Canadian woods, or the illimitable prairies of the Far, Far West; whilst the crack of the London gun may be heard reverberating through the fiords of Norway, even across eastward to the shores of the Black Sea. But our Indian sportsman has long been held up as the perfect model of a Nimrod, and the tiger-hunt is the culminating acme of our native island daring.

Mr. Daw's name some few years back came to be mixed up with that of Schneider, whom some people have canonised as a 'martyr' to government parsimony in connection with the Schneider rifle, now in the hands of the army. The following simple state-

its will show that Mr. Daw is the chief loser and martyr by any actions that took place between Schneider and the British Government :

' Paris, August 28, 1861.

' Received of Mr. George H. Daw the sum of seven hundred pounds sterling, the full amount agreed to be paid to me by him as contract of the 25th inst., for the transfer to him of the owner-
of my patents for Great Britain and Belgium for my improve-
ments in breech-loading fire-arms.

F. E. SCHNEIDER.

' Witnessed by me, D. H. Brandon, 13 Rue Gaillon, May 28, 1861.'

The above is a correct copy of the original document transferring Schneider's patents to Mr. Daw. The sale was brought about by a Jacob Snider, a commission agent who, wrote to Mr. Daw from Paris selecting Schneider as an intelligent workman; and as the result of certain negotiations, this bargain was made, and Schneider ended Mr. Daw's employment in England. In the inventions and improvements, &c., summarised in this agreement was the so-called 'Daw's gun', now in the hands of the army. Mr. Jacob Snider drew up the agreement; and upon Mr. Daw pointedly remarking, 'Does it include the gun in the corner?'—meaning thereby the gun previously rejected by the French Government, which stood in one end of the room where the transaction took place—Jacob Snider responded, 'Yes, of course, everything; you have bought all his inventions, why specify *that* one?' In 1862, Snider patented *that* very gun. On learning this, Mr. Daw reproached Schneider with a breach of his engagements, the workman being bound to hand the master, as per agreement, his inventions. Schneider denied point-blank having sanctioned the taking out of the patent; and subsequently the patent was, in technical parlance, completed by Snider only, although Schneider was still in England. Afterwards Schneider returned to the Continent in 1864, and Snider tried to sell it to a Birmingham gunmaker, saw Schneider and bought him out of it for 100*l*. Schneider afterwards, being a man of extravagant habits, was in bad circumstances; but the British Government had no more to do with it than Mr. Daw, who had been cheated out of 700*l*. There are many more circumstances, more or less disreputable, connected with the case of 'Schneider martyr,' which may be read in the *Standard* for November 26, 1868. It seems, however, after all, that this wonderful invention went through one more of many resuscitations; and it appears from the *Standard* that our Government *might* have had this weapon in 1835, had they cared to accept it. For this statement we must use the language of that journal, which we may remark, en passant—

SECOND SERIES, VOL. VII. F.S. VOL. XVII. Z

342 BREECH-LOADERS AND THEIR INVENTORS

sant, is very plain English, and not of that gushing or romantic style usually applied to 'Schneider the martyr' in society:

'The fundamental principle of the now called Snider-Enfield, in its prior and original state, was laid before the British Government in 1835. We tracings in our possession of the very drawings submitted to the War Department at that period, in which the slot in the barrel for inserting the cartridge, the breech-piece to drop in to close the cavity, the diagonal piston for exploding the central-fire cartridge, are as distinctly given as in the Schneider-Snider patent of 1862! This was neither the invention of Mr. Schneider nor of Mr. Snider, but of a very different man from either—an English gentleman, not of great wealth, but of a good family, a man of high spirit and honour, with an intense love of his country, and as well becomes a lineal descendant of the famous admiral who swept the Spaniards from the British seas, who traces his pedigree back to the Plantagenets, and sees in his ancestral roll some of the best of England's kings. All who may read for a shilling in Hotten's *History of Cornwall*, where it stands blank in all its worth, the pedigree of John Poad Drake—the real inventor of the 'reverted Enfield'—the man who has devoted many years of his life to the improvement of military arms. At eighty-two the old man still proudly retains his independent spirit, and his fingers never yet have touched one coin of unremunerative gold. Why he has not patented his invention will be simply and wittily told in his own words, penned a few days since in a letter to a friend: "You asked me yesterday if I had patented my invention now called the 'Snider-Enfield.' I have not, and I explained to General Peel why I did not patent my ordnance small-arms inventions—namely, because in 1854, having discussed with the Ordnance select committee, which was composed of five senior officers of Artillery, that far it was desirable, it was considered that if the Government did not adopt it it would be a waste of money; and at that date the gun speculation on the 'Snider-Aunt-Sally' principle was not begun. The department was then under the direction of Sir Hugh Ross as Master General of the Ordnance; but the moment the Tory Whig patriots (!) changed the Ordnance to the War Office the 'shy' Snider and Armstrong, under the influence of the Duke of Somerset, Sir Charles Sturt, and Sir George Grey, was one of the first favoured with a successful stick."

We desire, however, to supplement the literature of the Snider-Enfield, by stating that a gun of Henry VIII. in the Tower of London, with the exception of its possessing no self-igniting cartridge, is in principle much of a Snider-Enfield in fundamental principle as the modern one is itself. Without the Daw cartridge, whether it is called a Snider-Enfield or a broomstick, would make little difference in its efficacy as a military or sporting fire-arm.

General Jacob of the far-famed 'Scinde Horse' united with General Daw in producing the Daw-Jacob rifle, which, when used in combination with Jacob's 'shell bullets,' can either blow a tiger to pieces at 200 yards, or fire artillery trains at 2000 yards. Upon this point an officer who saw this deadly weapon used upon Garibaldian enemies can fully bear witness. The central-fire system is simple in its simplicity: a hammer strikes the top of a piston, sends it down the nipple cylinder, the lower end striking in its turn the percussion cap we have previously described in the centre of the charge, which immediately explodes the cartridge. When the hammer is retracted the spring at the same instant returns the piston to its place, and

ing above the nipple ready for another discharge. Mr. Daw has left little to be desired in breech-loading fire-arms, and has made many other inventions and improvements both in the *matériel* and *spirituel* of sporting guns. Messrs. Needham have patented a gun deserving of mention, on account of its obviating all chance of a premature or dangerous explosion of the cartridge. The barrels drop as the Lefauchaux gun; on the right-hand side of the stock is a lever lying parallel with the barrels, which, being depressed by means of the thumb, draws back the cam which locks the barrels, and allows them to fall. This lever also at the same time withdraws the strikers and throws the hammers back to half-cock; thus all chance of the strikers coming in contact with the cartridge is obviated, and this independently of the sportsman. One special advantage always alleged in favour of the pin-cartridge gun by its admirers over the central fire, is that in the former it can readily be seen whether it is loaded or not; whilst in the latter it is necessary to unlock the breech. This has been obviated by Messrs. Needham's arrangement, as a glance at the position of the hammers indicates unerringly whether the barrels are loaded or not. The Needham rifle, selected for special trial by the Russian and Austrian governments, is a strong and serviceable weapon. In these days of 'Yankee notions,' when all kinds of complications are applied to rifles, apparently to break down in actual service, it is gratifying to see that a London gunmaker has carefully avoided them, and taken simplicity of structure as his guide. After firing, in taking the Needham rifle from the shoulder, it is opened by turning the stock with the right hand, which at the same time expels the empty cartridge case and cocks the gun; it is then ready to receive the new cartridge, after which a turn of the hand towards the left effectually closes the breech; this may be done when putting the rifle to the shoulder preparatory to taking a fresh aim; so there is no time lost. Indeed, there are only two motions in loading and firing.

There are only 'fourteen parts' in this rifle, including 'screws;' and in this respect it recommends itself for warlike use. It is, moreover, of a rare strength in its component parts, and is not likely to get injured by a careless soldier, or by accidents in the field. The prime minister of the king of Siam has fixed upon it as the special arm for the 'braves' of 'His Majesty of the White Elephant;' and considering the American rubbish sold to foreign powers in the East generally, it is a matter of gratulation to the Siamese that they possess a good sound English-made weapon. Double rifles and fowling-pieces can also be made on the same system; but as a military arm its manifold excellences appear to us incomparable. For instance, as a cavalry carbine, such a simple and efficient weapon we do not at the present moment possess in our army.

Messrs. Wilkinson have patented a central-fire gun well worthy

of note. In the striking portion *one piece* supplies the place of three, four, and five in some of the detestable spiral-spring movements, which end in failure when in actual service. The extractor, too, consists of *one piece* only. The 'direct action' embodied in this gun is much admired by many, who like a system which insures the full force of the mainspring being exerted on the cap. As regards safety from accidents when loaded—a consummation devoutly to be wished in all guns—in Messrs. Wilkinson's gun it is impossible to get the striker in a dangerous position as regards the cap, or to explode it except by cocking the gun and pulling the trigger. There are no springs in any part of this gun except the locks; and as an economical plan of converting a favourite muzzle-loader into a breech-loading gun, it appears to us the simplest mode of effecting such an object.

Mr. Lancaster, amongst gunmakers, is as a 'triton amongst the minnows;' and his services have been appreciated by Government to the amount of 15,000*l.* As, unhappily, our 'War Office Juggernaut' has the reputation of crushing more inventors under its wheels than those it rewards, and as it is well known that it oftener gives 'stones than bread' to its devotees, we can quite believe Mr. Lancaster's statement when he says that he is out of pocket to a similar amount. From 1844 until quite recently Mr. Lancaster has given his assistance to the Government, yet we find him undecorated; he is neither a C.B. nor a K.C.B., and has but the consciousness of having performed his duty nobly to his country to console him for lack of social *prestige*. Like Mr. John Poad Drake, he is one of that numerous class of 'unrecognised public benefactors.' His modesty and lack of 'interest' have hid his light under a bushel of red tape and neglect. The inventor of the 'Lancaster gun' is still plain 'Mr.,' whilst the more lucky projector of its rival the 'Armstrong' enjoys a 'handle' to his name. In 1846 the 'Iron Duke' adopted the Lancaster carbine into the service of the country. In 1851 it was found the Minié rifle could not be made to shoot properly without his assistance; and he perfected a system which prevented the 'cup' of the bullet blowing through, and made it efficient. And even the vaunted Armstrong gun required his skill—to fit it with the 'double tangent sights with Vernier's arrangements,' now seen *wherever* they are used. For many reasons, however, best known to officers and soldiers, the Armstrong gun has been removed from the service as a breech-loader. The boring machinery at Woolwich was designed and perfected by him; and the 'special rifle powder' made by him has been adopted into the service.

In addition to these inventions, his plan for destroying the obstructions at Cronstadt by means of submarine bodies was accepted by the Government. He also drew up reports for the Government on the capabilities of the gun trade to manufacture arms, and on

machinery to manufacture Lancaster shells for use in the Crimea. He bought iron and materials for the Government, introduced a new mortar and 'mortar bed,' and also his well-known 'oval bore' for field-guns and mountain artillery. And with regard to the 'Lancaster rifle,' the Ordnance Select Committee recommended 'that arrangements should be made with the inventor for use by the Government.' Like many other intentions of the Government, they have gone to macadamise other regions. This is but a tithe of what Mr. Lancaster did for his country; what his country did for him was to delude him with the *ignis fatuus* of a promise of an 'honorary reward.'

As he has been engaged since 1844 in the service of the country, and this promise has not yet been fulfilled, we may look upon it as another instance of 'that hope deferred which maketh the heart sick.' It must be a satisfaction to Mr. Lancaster, if he nourishes any feelings of revenge in his heart, that should we ever be engaged in deadly strife with Russia, that *his* own guns will possibly be brought to bear against the iron shields for forts recently erected by him in that country; in which case it is to be hoped he has *not* riveted them too strongly, as a practical test of the efficiency of his own weapon. As a gunmaker his sporting rifles and fowling-pieces are well known. Mr. Lancaster's inventions would require a book to themselves; and it is to be hoped that some day they may make their appearance in that shape.

Amongst breech-loaders we must class revolvers, which have been associated in the public mind for years with the name of Colt. For superiority of material and workmanship, safety, simplicity, durability, accuracy and celerity of fire, great length of range, force of penetration, they possess important advantages both for public and private service. The barrel is rifle-bored. The lever ramrod renders wadding or patch unnecessary, and secures the charge against moisture, or becoming loose by rough handling or hard riding. The hammer, when at full cock, forms the sight by which to take aim, and is readily raised to full cock by the thumb with one hand.

The carbine breech is attached to the 8-inch barrel army or to the navy revolver, and is an improvement by which the pistol may be made an efficient substitute for the carbines now in general use, without detracting from the special and peculiar qualities of the revolver. The weapon may be used with great facility and convenience as a carbine; and when not required for such use, the pistol may be removed and placed in the holster on the body, the butt or stock being allowed to swing from a strap or sling over the back, or at the side. An obvious advantage of this fitting is, that, when in action, if all the charges of a repeating arm have been fired, the discharged pistol may be instantly exchanged for the other of the pair in the

346 BREECH-LOADERS AND THEIR INVENTORS

holster. Practical experience has proved that the Colt revolver, as a substitute for the carbine, would be a boon to the soldier.

Messrs. Adams have of late years supplanted the Colt in the favour of the British Government, and now supply all the revolvers required for the army and navy.

Some important experiments were recently made at Woolwich with the Adams and the Colt breech-loading revolvers. The results were largely in favour of the Adams pistol. Each arm was fired by its own representative. The Adams, a lighter weapon, with a lighter charge of powder, and a shorter length of barrel, was loaded much more quickly, fired with far greater accuracy, and had greater penetrative power.

The tiny 'Derringer,' manufactured by Colt, has supplanted both these weapons in the affections of the 'pistolling' public; and as a 'paper weight' for an editor's desk in the United States, it is a *sine quâ non*.

The Tower contains many specimens of early revolvers, as well as breech-loaders, which, in point of date, are far anterior to any in continental museums.

As 'charity commences at home,' according to all 'goody' books, and we are told in Sacred Writ that 'it covers a multitude of sins,' it would be just as well, perhaps, for intending writers on breech-loaders to do their own country justice in the matter, and to commence a new era for the origin of the breech-loading system, dating from 1471 in England, and not from 1540 in France, as hitherto supposed.

As a race of public benefactors, our gunmakers are patriotic to a degree, and 'arms,' as a mercantile commodity, are a source of employment to thousands, and of great wealth to the nation. It has enabled Mr. Lowe to make us pay a tax of ten shillings per gun; and besides that is productive of game licenses to six times the amount.

CADWALLADER WADDY.

GO-A-HEAD GIRLS

A Discursive Chapter on Transatlantic Floriculture

I REMEMBER one summer evening some five years ago, when skimming bird-like over the waters of Long Island Sound on board a 'floating palace' of the 'Bristol line' of steamers, which have no equals anywhere outside the American continent, being struck with a singularly eccentric ditty that a 'deck hand' was carolling out to the full extent of his lungs in the moonlit air, as we went bounding along Boston-wards at the rate of five-and-twenty miles per hour, leaving behind us an ever-expanding track of silvery sheen which broke into coruscations of light in our more immediate wake.

The bathos of this melody was something sublime. After tendering the general information that he 'knew a gal, and she lived out West,' the stentorian singer proceeded to furnish us with a few interesting particulars regarding the wardrobe of his fancy's queen. She 'had a coat and had a vest,' he said, or rather sung. Rising with his subject, he added that he 'loved her better-er than the rest-er,' presumably alluding to the numerous other damsels who might have been disputing for the possession of his tarry hand; and told her so, 'for,' as he concluded in a rapturous burst of chorus, 'her name was Norah Maggie More-ah! Swiggy-ma-roo-ral, Dicky-doo-ral, Macduff!'—rather a taking patronymic, by the way. In the second verse we subsequently learnt that the lady was so overcome by the frantic avowal of her lover's passion, that 'she fainted away.' Help was at hand, however, so 'they brought her to with some turtle-soup'—a strong stimulant, one would think, just fit for a lassie who wore a coat and vest, not to allude to the other unwhisperable male garments which she might possibly have affected; and, finally, 'they made her a tent out of her hoop'—this was in the days of crinoline, and it might have been surmised that the improvised shelter was hastily 'run up,' to provide the seclusion which her situation required, had not the ballad peremptorily set it down to the fact of her name being 'Norah Maggie More-ah! Swiggy-ma-roo-ral, Dicky-doo-ral, Macduff.' So ran the deck-hand's patter-song; and, do you know, it seems to me to give a very tolerable idea of the strong-minded, fanciful, eminently feminine, would-be masculine, sentimental, practical, lackadaisical, 'go-a-head' American 'girl of the period' who is commonly to be met with on 't'other side of Jordan.'

Understand, however, that it is not for a moment left to be in-

ferred by the reader that *all* the American fair sex are dogmatically classed under this generic term, which no more represents the belles of Transatlantica, than do the distinctive exceptionalities of the *Ne-plus-ultra Review* exhibit the common characteristics of our young-womanhood of England. No, even a casual tourist, who had spent but a fortnight of 'interviewing' and being 'interviewed' in the States, would know better than that. We have all read how, a hundred years ago, the historic mothers and wives and daughters of the New England colonists urged on their sons, their husbands, and their brothers—worthy descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers of old—to resist the despotic encroachments of the mother country, and fight to achieve their independence. We all know how, only yesterday, so to speak, the brave ladies of the Southern States cheerfully relinquished their loved ones, and bade them die in the same sacred cause, the defence of their hearths and homes, their rights as men; and there can be little doubt that the land of Washington and Stonewall Jackson, patriots both to their heart's core, could produce as bright examples of those noble qualities of self-sacrifice, purity, and devotion, which have tended to place woman on the proud poetic pinnacle of preëminence that she occupies in this era of civilisation, as could Rome when the mother of the Gracchi lived; England during the time of the Indian mutiny; or France but the other day when sinking under the horrors of invasion, bloodshed, and civil war—as, indeed, either country could furnish again, were the time and opportunity not wanting. But, with all this, there are some exceptional features of feminine life in the United States, as there are in the case of ourselves, and with reference to our neighbours on the Continent: to touch upon these social idiosyncrasies is the purport of the present paper.

Nowhere can you see so many pretty girls of different distinct types of beauty as in New York. Not Unter den Linden at Berlin, the boulevards of Paris, our own Regent-street at the correct hour of the afternoon, or even Rotten-row in the height of the season, displays so many varied siren charms at once as Broadway can supply any time of the day—winter, spring, and summer, all the year round. I say 'any time of the day' advisedly; for in the morning and evening, one can watch the work-girls of the city—and American working lasses are not only of a better class, but infinitely more dressy and modish, than our milliners, modistes, and 'distressed needlewomen'—as they proceed 'up' and 'down town' to their respective places of employment; while, towards noon, the staid young ladies of the city come out to shop at Stewart's great 'dry-goods store' at the corner of Tenth-street, turn over jewelry at Ball and Black's (the Howell and James's of Gotham City), or take exercise in looking into the many handsome photographers, print-shops, and bonnet establishments that stud the thoroughfare,

dispersed with monster hotels, theatres, restaurants, sweetie pots, where the luscious gum-drop and toothaching marsh-mallow may be procured, and oyster saloons, the latter 'located' principally in the cellar-ways, like the Liverpool 'dives.' When the day begins to wane, and business men to flock homewards, thereby increasing their crowd of admirers, then does the third class—it would by rights be the first—of belles, the 'upper ten thousand' (tens of thousands worth) of Fifth Avenue, sally forth and take its walks abroad, for the exhibition of the 'latest thing' in fashionable gaiters imported from some *magasin de nouveautés* of the once 'gay' quarter of the old world. At night all social degrees in the scale of humanity may be seen mingled together, work-girls, middle-class ladies, and 'swells,' floating along the 'side-walk' to 'assist' at the spectacular drama, or eating ices in Maillard's gilded parlours; consequently one cannot be very far out in saying that pretty girls abound on Broadway at all hours of the day—speaking only of its peripatetic beauties, and barely hinting at those others who, either reclining on the soft cushions of London-made barouches, stuck up askew in gaunt antiquated hackney coaches and rattled by on spindle-legged buggies during the summer solstice, or gliding past in the graceful cutter-sleigh to the musical chime of the bell-wreathed sleighs in the winter, are to be observed along its weary length—from the picturesque, creeper-encircled Grace church, down to the 'Battery,' with its disused bowling-green, verdant no longer.

Here may be seen representatives of the fair sex from every part of the Union: the dark-haired, dark-eyed, regal-looking, Spanish-beauty from Baltimore and other parts 'down South'; the stouter-built, ruddy-faced, and more English-looking Western specimens; and the fragile lily-complexioned blonde from the Eastern States. Taking them all in all, American women are very pretty, though rarely beautiful. Jetty tresses and hazel-almond eyes—such as Mahomet promises to his believers with the houris in Paradise—predominate as a national and physical trait amongst them, in spite of the recent rage for golden locks and the power of artificial dyes. They have wonderfully clear-cut features, and possess an air of refinement, extending even to the lowest orders, which one would not find amongst the average frequenters of our metropolitan streets. Their beauty is more *spirituelle* than ours; they lack the well-developed figures and healthy look of English women, being mostly pale, thin, and May-poley. Climatic influence, and the lack of exercise to those who are not absolutely obliged to go out, age them very rapidly. An American girl who has lived in New York city all her life will generally look at eighteen as old as one of thirty and-twenty with us; and, instead of verging towards *embonpoint* with the lapse of time, she gets thinner and thinner, until at last she appears like our venerable grandmother of seventy odd.

directed, and, with few exceptions, well-bred. 'Artemus' description of a fascinating fair one, who, on his calling 'gazelle,' retorted that he was 'a sheep,' and then, w bungled at 'popping the question,' and could not exactly what he wanted, suggested that if he 'intended splicin,' 'g that she was 'on,' must not be taken *au pied du lettr* doubt there are many 'playful' girls 'out West' who might language, and 'if a feller happened to be too sassy,' perad 'percolate daylight through him with a six-shooter;' but thes not be taken as fair representatives of the feminine culture continent. We might just as well claim to have the type of girlhood selected from amongst rustic dairymaids with the n of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, or cockney servants who their h's and learnt the amenities of life from the teachings butchers' boys and policemen who frequented their areas. is certainly a good deal of practicability about the women of A especially amongst such as come from the New England and after the age of babyhood they are generally averse to ment, putting it down as 'all bunkum and soft sawder.' This be illustrated by the anecdote of the matter-of-fact young who, on her amorous swain's hesitating in his 'high-eulogy, and saying that her smiles 'would shed—ah, woul —ah, would shed,' told him 'Nary mind the wood-shed mister, do go long with your pretty talk,'—sufficient, one think, to shut up his flow of eloquence for good and all.

ss.' It is conducted by Mesdames Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, whose imaginative 'leaders' are laughed at from Maine to California, and from Buffalo to the Crescent City. The chief journal of this latter place, the *New Orleans Times*, had the other day a very good skit against the *Revolution* ladies and the ends they advocate. 'A circumstance,' says the editor, 'has just occurred in Wyoming calculated to make Mrs. Susan B. Anthony howl with rage, and Mrs. Cady Stanton lapse into languid hysterics. Showing as it does a new, or rather a pair of new obstacles in the pathway of the woman's-rights movement, the inopportune occurrence cannot be too much deprecated. As in all other grievances through which women suffer, a man was at the bottom of it; and the fact is now demonstrated more plainly than ever, that unless this tyrant is subjected to the most rigid discipline, and curtailed effectively of his liberty, the cause of woman's suffrage will be hopelessly lost. It occurred in this wise: Wyoming boasts of a lady judge, before whom several highly important cases are waiting to be tried. The other day she was obliged to vacate her seat, and the course of Wyoming justice will suffer disastrously for a month at least. The cause of this may be briefly stated in one word—Twins.' Touching a mere question of women being allowed to vote if they like, there are many eminent men in England who support the views of those who argue that they should, on the principle of equity, that if a woman pays certain taxes, being a widow or unmarried person, she ought to possess the same right of voting as a man, whose qualification rests not on the mere fact of his being a man, but in consequence of his paying such and such rates, or being a householder, widger, or what not. One may sympathise with this idea of 'woman's rights,' but the representatives of the movement go a good deal further on the other side of the Atlantic. They cry out not only for women being allowed to vote, but also that they should become candidates, represent constituencies, hold the reins of political government—as they now hold the reins of the domestic despotism—and, in fact, turn the poor but legitimate owner of the 'bifurcated garments' out of his present sphere altogether, and leave him at home to mind their babies while *they* are to go abroad in his stead. I cannot say much for the oratorical eloquence of either of the 'editresses' of the *Revolution*; but Miss Anna Dickenson, whom I have also heard in public, on the occasion of a very large 'Grant meeting' at the Cooper Institute, New York, in favour of the present President when he was canvassing for his post, is a fair speaker, rather fervid and given to rhapsody; still, pleasing if not commanding. A peculiar habit she has, however, of blinking her eyes when expounding—just like an owl when suddenly exposed to daylight—somewhat mars the effect of her oratory. Besides advocating woman's rights, she was a great abolitionist before the

civil war, and is esteemed to be as great a friend of 'the pore black man' as Horace Greeley. Report has it that, *sub rosa*, she holds Frederick Douglas, the representative of advanced Ethiopianism in America, in even a 'nearer and dearer' relationship: she is rather short, looks young, and is not absolutely plain. Of 'Mrs. Olive Logan,' and some others of a depraved class who urge the abolition of the marriage tie and women being allowed to select lovers and change them as often as Phryne, Cleopatra, Ninon de l'Enclos, or the Anonymas of some years' back celebrity, one need hardly speak; the only wonder is, that even in the much-vaunted freedom-loving States such foul ideas should be allowed utterance. As, however, the United States authorities have had their wits awakened to the immorality of Mormonism, to the effect that they have shut up the prophet Brigham Young in prison, perhaps some day they may think it worth their while to close the mouths of these 'lady' agitators, who disseminate and act up to the doctrine of 'free love' beneath their very noses; one 'establishment' on this foundation being well known in New York State, not far from the 'Empire City.'

The dress of the ladies in the chief American towns, such as Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Cincinnati, and so on, is always in the height of the Parisian mode, as they receive the latest fashions from the French capital, or at least did so prior to the late war, almost as soon as we in England. They do not *Americanise* their costume to any apparent extent, as Londoners try to Anglicise the effusions of the Palais-Royal *modiste*, consequently their toilettes are rather excessive and 'loud' to an English eye; but they wear them well nevertheless, and the style of the boulevards seems also to suit their foreign cast of countenance and slender build. I remember when the 'Grecian bend,' as it was called, was introduced over the water. It created a good deal of criticism and general laughter at first; but ere three months had elapsed you would see the fashion imitated even in the remotest backwoods settlements by some daughter of the Republic, whose father had just 'struck ile,' and was, perhaps, capable of writing his name. As for 'chignons,' I believe they reached a larger growth in America than they did here; are stuck to as religiously, and are defended as bravely. It is commonly asserted, that a Massachusetts maiden would consent to pass the rest of her days in single blessedness, and be deprived for ever of the consolation of the national 'pumpkin-pie,' ere she would part with the absurd fashion of binding a mass of horsehair to the back of her cranium, that she has imitated from the Makololo chieftains of South Africa. But I should not forget to add, that if Transatlantic ladies are bigoted in their blind adherence to the formularities of fashion, they have the good taste never to appear out of doors but *bien gantée*, and are extremely bewitching in their *bottines*, and choice in their *chaussure*.

Like the *bourgeoisie* under the Empire in France, and some of our Cottonopolis belles, they are accused of great extravagance; and Desmarest, the Elise of New York, is said to heap up 'piles' of dollars every year in greenbacks, through the frivolities of the fair Manhattanese. Not long ago the *Herald* published a catalogue of the wardrobe effects of a bankrupt young lady of fashion, which excited considerable comment at the time: if I recollect aright, she had, amongst other things, a *hundred and forty* silk dresses! Such being the state of things, it cannot be wondered that there is every now and then on the other side of the Atlantic as much talk of the impossibility of marriage on a limited income, as there was over here when the 'three hundred a year' controversy filled the columns of the daily and weekly press. According to the statement of the young man called John' in the *Professor at the Breakfast-table*, a fellah can't marry a woman nowadays till you're so deaf you have to cock your head like a parrot to hear what she says, and so long-sighted you can't see what she looks like nearer than arm's length. I look at them girls, and feel as the fellah did when he missed catchin' the trout. To'od 'a' cost more butter to cook him as he's worth, said the fellah. Takes a whole piece of goods to cover a girl up nowadays. I'd as lief undertake to keep a span of elephants, and take an ostrich to board too, as to marry one of 'em. What's the use? Clerks and counterjumpers a'n't anything. Sparra-rass and green peas a'n't for them,—not while they're young and tender. Hossback-ridin' a'n't for them—except once a year, on lastday. And marryin' a'n't for them. Sometimes a fellah feels lonely, and would like to have a nice young woman, to tell her how lonely he feels. And sometimes a fellah,—here the young man John looked very confidential, and, perhaps, as if a little ashamed of his weakness,—sometimes a fellah would like to have one of them small young ones to trot on his knee and push about in a little wagon,—a kind of a little Johnny, you know;—it's odd enough, but it seems to me, nobody can afford them little articles, except the folks that are so rich they can buy up everything, and the folks that are so poor they don't want anything. It makes nice boys of us young fellahs, no doubt! And it's pleasant to see fine young girls sittin', like shopkeepers behind their goods, waitin', and waitin', and waitin', 'n' no customers,—and the men lingerin' round and lookin' at the goods, like folks that want to be customers, but haven't got the money!

To turn to another point, it should be said that in America young unmarried girls are allowed a wonderful deal of license to what we are accustomed in England, although many foreign critics have blamed the freedom with which we allow young men and ladies to associate in our everyday life. In the United States this freedom between the sexes is a hundred times greater than with us. Girls are,

in fact, allowed to do just as they please—go out alone with favoured cavaliers, visit the theatre and public places of amusement *sans chaperone*, carry on a clandestine correspondence, and otherwise act as fancy guides them—without ‘mamma’ or ‘papa’ being consulted in any way, or their wishes and advice deferred to. A gentleman, or ‘young man,’ may call at houses and ask merely to see Miss So-and-so, with no intention, wish, or obligation, to visit her parents; and in a family of girls each sister may have her respective ‘beau,’ who pays his devoirs to her alone, without seeing any others of the household. Under this rule of society in Transatlantica, strict introduction from mutual friends is by no means *de rigueur*. Should a young American in New York—and the same is the case all over the country—be struck by the charms of some fair Manhattanese, whom he meets in the streets, or comes across as a fellow-traveller on board a ferryboat, or in the horse-cars or ‘stages,’ he may get acquainted with the object of his passion, and possibly marry her; and yet be under no obligation to ‘society’ in the matter. The manner of procedure is as follows: Romeo draws up an advertisement describing the special ‘points’ of his charmer, and inserts it in the ‘Personals’ of the *Herald*, a portion of that paper similar, only much more ‘advanced’ in character, to the noteworthy ‘second column’ of the *Times*. Romeo’s notice will probably run like this: ‘If the young lady with blue eyes and light hair, and wearing a black bonnet with a green veil’—he takes more notice of the ‘dry goods’ effects than John Bull would—‘and who appeared pleased with the attention of a dark gentleman with a black moustache and imperial, who sat opposite her yesterday in a Broadway stage that went from Canal-street to Fifth-avenue, will address Romeo, *Herald* Office, she will confer a great favour on a sincere admirer.’ I merely quote one out of some hundred advertisements which may be seen every morning in the New York papers. On seeing this advertisement—and you may be sure that the Personal column of the *Herald* is glanced at in nearly every household where there are any womankind—Juliet, should she have likewise perceived the insidious advances of the winged god, writes an answer; a meeting is appointed; Romeo and the fair one go through all the various ecstasies and agonies of ‘love’s young dream’ by degrees, without any one save themselves being aware even of their acquaintanceship; and perhaps one fine morning Juliet coolly tells ‘dad’ that she ‘guesses’ she’ll ‘get married,’ and invites him and her mother to witness the ceremony, which, in order to spare their feelings, has been arranged without troubling them to consult over the affair. Of course, this is not always the case in all grades of society. There are many select old families in New York and Boston that are as proud of their antiquity and jealous of their dignity as the old noblesse of the Faubourg St. Germain; but the ordinary ‘upper middle-class’ and lower strata of humanity

America are not by any means particular on the subject of 'the etiquette of courtship and marriage,' and let their young people do as they please, which they effect in the most extraordinary manner sometimes.

The probable reason for this laxity of decorum amongst young American women is, without doubt, on account of the absence of any 'home feeling' in those, the majority of the people, who dwell in cities and live in hotels and boarding-houses. In all towns in the United States domestic life, as evinced in private housekeeping, is the exception, and 'boarding out' the rule. To show this, it may be stated that New York with its million inhabitants does not occupy an extent greater than eighteen square miles, being nine miles long and on an average two broad; and a larger portion of this space is taken up by parks, public buildings, monster stores, and places of business than by dwelling-houses; consequently about a million of human beings live in an area not greater probably than ten square miles at the outside, allowing a very large margin for errors of calculation, which gives the average rate of population at nearly one hundred thousand persons to a square mile: this speaks to the existence of one boarding-house over the separate mansion or cottage. Owing to this system of life, all feelings of home and domestic privacy are destroyed; and thus American girls never look forward to having an agreeable evening or 'good time' at home, surrounded by their friends; to have pleasure they must go out to some place of public amusement, whence they are naturally more forward and independent, and it must be also said 'faster,' than English lassies of the same age. Indeed the 'smartness' of these Transatlantic ladies, and their common knowledge of things which our girls would not understand, even at the bare allusion, would startle any new-comer in the United States who might notice it for the first time. I have seen respectably-dressed and apparently modest girls laughing over the vulgarities and appreciating the *doubles-entendres* of a questionable drama with as much unconcern and relish as a Corinthian Tom or Jerry might have displayed.

I have said that American girls are generally well educated; and so they are. The admirable system of education current in the States fully accounts for this intellectual ability of the fair sex. All go to college there, and attend classes for high instruction; so that Tennyson's idealic 'Sweet girl-graduates with golden hair' are actually facts on the other side of the big pond. In conclusion, a visitor to the territory of the great Republic cannot but admire the general way in which women are there employed, and notice what industrious and earnest workers they are. It is deemed no shame in America for stable, well-educated persons of even the middle class to adopt manual labour, such as sewing for wholesale establishments and the making of book-work. Young ladies—they may be called so

in every sense of the word—who in England, if forced to earn their bread, would never consent to working in any capacity save governing, considering other and manual employment ‘degrading,’ in the New World make twenty times the incomes of ill-paid teachers by the honest labour of their hands, without, as far as I could see, being any the worse for it or the less lady-like in consequence.

‘Norah Maggie More-ah, Swiggy-ma-roo-ral, Dicky-doo-ral MacDuff’ may be a type of the exceptional features of feminine nature in America, as I’ve said; but there, as elsewhere, plenty of good women can be found of the same stamp as she who, according to Solomon’s wise dictum—and he ought to have been a judge in the matter, considering that he tried a great number—is ‘a pearl beyond price,’ and ‘a crown to her husband.’

JOHN C. HUTCHESON.

THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

CHAPTER XXXVI. AS DULL AS DITCH-WATER.

'FLORRY, Florry! what shall I do?' said Alice, as they entered the schoolroom. 'I was just congratulating myself that my Edward could not be mixed up with that Miss Edith Price, and, in fact, I had half made up my mind that she was all a story invented by Lady Sweetapple, and there I see, staring me in my face, a letter of Edward's handwriting to Miss Edith Price. What shall I do?'

'I am sure I can't tell,' said Florry. 'I am at my wits' end. Only I should say, as they can't both be in love with her and keep each good friends, that they are neither of them in love with her at all. If two people love the same person, my dear, those two hate one another. Just look at me and Lady Sweetapple.'

'The worst is,' said Alice, 'we can't speak about it. Our tongues are tied.'

'Yes,' said Florry. 'Why did we promise?'

'I wonder how she found out about Miss Price,' said Alice.

'I don't wonder at all. It seems quite natural to me that she should find out all the evil she can of others, with her nasty underhand ways.'

We will leave the sisters to themselves in their perplexity, and ask why it was that Edward Vernon wrote that stupid letter to Edith Price. It was from a very good motive. He thought he would write a few lines to the poor girl, and tell her that of course he had received Harry's cheque. He was so happy, in fact, in having gained the affections of Alice, that, just before the whole party went out for that walk, when, as we know by the glimpse we caught of the lovers in the beechen dell, he made his final declaration of love and was accepted, so far as it is in the power of young ladies to accept their lovers—just before going out, we say, he sat down and dashed off a few kind lines to Edith, who, he well knew, needed consolation in her trials. So now you know why the letter was written, and see how ill those judge who scrutinise a letter from the outside, and put the worst construction on its contents. Really, the harm done in this world by speculations and conjectures made

on the inside of letters by people who only see their covers, is some — thing too serious even to think of.

Very different from the conversation of the sisters was that of Harry and Edward when they met.

'Lazy fellow!' said Harry. 'Why didn't you come with us? You would have heard such a lecture on the growing of sugar-beet from Lord Pennyroyal, followed by the absolute denunciation of those who, when they have grown sugar, are wasteful enough to put two lumps of sugar every morning into their cup of tea. To hear him talk, one would think no man's income would stand the drain caused by two lumps of sugar at breakfast in your cup of tea.'

'I daresay it was very amusing. Lord Pennyroyal is always either amusing or instructive, which is more than can be said of most people. But I say I was better employed.'

'With Alice?' asked Harry.

'Not at all,' said Edward. 'With Lady Carlton. She made me walk with her the whole way back, and you may fancy what a fright I was in when she began to ask me about my prospects.'

'Prospects!' muttered Harry; 'she had better have asked you about your intentions. But what did you say?'

'I told her frankly that I had no prospects, and hoped I never should have any. I am too fond of my elder brother to hope that he may break his neck out hunting; and even then, as he has a young family, I should have to pray that they might all be cut off at once by diphtheria, or drowned in a yacht, as I have seen a whole succession of steps to a property destroyed in one hurricane by a writer of fiction.'

'And what did she say then?' asked Harry. 'For you know, old fellow, that as to prospects, you and I are pretty well in the same boat.'

'O,' said Edward, 'she did not say anything very positive or definite, but in a general way she hinted that both Sir Thomas and herself had long ago made up their minds that they would never interfere in a matter where their daughters' affections were concerned, provided the objects of their choice were gentlemen born and bred.'

'That I call highly satisfactory,' said Harry. 'And I suppose, on the strength of this general declaration, you left the mother and proposed to Alice before you got back to the house?'

'Not at all,' said Edward; 'for, if you must know, I had proposed before we got to the oak where the ladies turned back. I don't know how it was done, but the thought seized me in that dell, and out came the words like the gold and gems out of the mouth of the good child in the fairy tale.'

'Upon my word, Ned, you don't let the grass grow under your feet. And, pray, what did that good child Alice say?'



J. A. Pasquier, del.

L. M. M. M.

A DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT OF SUGAR.

'That I'm not going to tell,' said Edward; 'but she was as good as gold, and really, after what Lady Carlton said, I think I have some chance with Alice.'

'Have you ever thought,' said Harry, 'what it is to marry so much money?'

'Indeed I have not,' said Edward. 'I have only thought of marrying Alice. You know I have enough for my own wants, all except my want for Alice, and that is quite apart from a sixpence of her fortune, whatever that may be.'

'Whatever that may be!' said Harry. 'Let me see. Let us reflect, as Mr. Sonderling says: from a quarter to half a million, that's what they call the "figure" of each of Sir Thomas Carlton's daughters.'

'You don't say so?' said Edward. 'But I can safely say I never thought of her as anything else than Alice Carlton, the most charming sympathetic girl of my acquaintance.'

'You never reflected on it,' said Harry mockingly.

'Never!' said Edward. 'But it's time for five-o'clock tea; we had better go down; and besides, I long to see Alice.'

In the drawing-room all the party were now reassembled—Lord Pennyroyal still full of the duty of every man to grow sugar-beet, and of young women to save money by putting only one lump of sugar into a cup of tea.

'But suppose I like my tea sweet?' said Lady Sweetapple, who was very lively, having, as she thought, sown discord between Florry and Harry, and who cared not a pin for all the sugar-beet in the world, and whether the best sort to sow were 'Sutton's Green Silesian' seed, as Lord Pennyroyal protested, if only that crop of dragons' teeth which she had sown between the incipient lovers could only spring up fast and thick. 'But suppose I like my tea sweet?'

'You ought not to like it sweet,' said Lord Pennyroyal dictatorially. 'Too much sugar is a bad thing. Sugar spoils the teeth and impairs the gastric juice. It makes people fat, and so all ladies ought to be against it; for of all unbecoming things I think it is the most. Then it produces divers diseases—diabetes, Bright's disease, and I know not what.'

'Would you forbid it altogether?' said Lady Sweetapple.

'No, not at all,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'If I did, I should not be so strong an advocate for the cultivation of sugar-beet.'

'But I suppose,' said Amicia, 'the more sugar-beet is grown, the more sugar there will be to consume.'

'Precisely so,' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'But if with one breath you forbid the consumption of sugar, and with the next advocate the extension of its production, I don't see that you are consistent,' said Lady Sweetapple sarcastically.

came up to Alice, full of life and love, she received him very coldly, and was altogether so constrained and reserved, that he felt quite abashed. Harry Fortescue, as we know, had not got so far on with Florry; and so when he came and said something to her, Florry was actually cross, and said something about hypocrites and crocodiles, which he could not at all understand; and so it happened that the five-o'clock tea passed off very dully for those four young people. Surveying them from a distance, Amicia could not help seeing that the leaven she had mixed in their meal was beginning to work, and she was glad. 'How lucky,' she thought, 'that that very uninteresting young man, Mr. Vernon, should have written a letter to Miss Edith Price, just as though he wished to support what I said. There can be no doubt she is a very designing artful person, and when I get Harry away from this house, I must take care to get him out of her clutches. She may have Mr. Vernon, and welcome, if she pleases.'

Altogether, the conversation would have been very dull, had not Lady Pennyroyal fluttered Lady Sweetapple not a little by a revelation as astonishing as it was kind.

'Dear Lady Carlton,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'what do you think? I have persuaded Lord Pennyroyal to take a house at Ascot for the races.'

If she had said she had persuaded Lord Pennyroyal to embark on a crusade against the Patagonians, the announcement could not have been more unexpected to the party in general, or more unpleasant to Lady Sweetapple. But this unpleasantness rather arose out of what followed; for when Lady Carlton answered with a very emphatic 'Indeed! That will be delightful,' Lady Pennyroyal went on in the same breath,

'Yes; and, do you know, I wish you to let your daughters come to stay with me at Ascot during the race-week.'

It was of little use that Lady Carlton protested that she and Sir Thomas did not care for races—their daughters might, if they did not. Nor when Florry and Alice, in their present sulky mood, declared that they thought races the dullest things in the world, did they fare any better than their parents, for Lady Pennyroyal said she must have them with her to keep her company; and even Lord Pennyroyal came forward, and forgetting his sugar-beet and his parsimony together, said that nothing could give him so much pleasure as to see the sisters under his roof at Ascot.

The end of it was, that in less than five minutes the whole matter was arranged, and it was settled that Florry and Alice were to be Lady Pennyroyal's guests, as she proposed.

'How delightful it will be for you, old fellow!' said Edward. 'You know you are already asked, but I don't think it will be so

jolly for me during that week. I shall go down to Pump-court and stick to business.'

'Don't be a fool,' said Harry. 'I'll get you an invitation from Lady Charity; see if I don't. The only bore is, that Lady Sweetapple, by her scowling face, does not seem to like Lady Pennyroyal's proposal, and to judge from the sisters' looks, they neither of them seem particularly happy.'

'There's something the matter,' said Edward; 'but what it is I cannot tell.'

So Lady Sweetapple sat and scowled. To think that Lady Pennyroyal should have spoilt all her plans by such a silly invitation! What did such young chits of girls know about races? And then to think that Harry Fortescue would be sure to meet Florry Carlton every day at least at Ascot. Far better would it have been to have had him all to herself up in London. But she had done it for the best.

As for Florry, she would have been supremely happy, and she was happy, only not so happy as if she had never heard the name of Edith Price. Already she had a morbid feeling about the name, and could not get it out of her head. She saw 'Price' and 'Edith Price' everywhere.

Nor was Alice at all happy; what was the good of going to Ascot if Edward did not go too? If she went to Ascot, Edward would be left alone in London, and as he knew Edith Price—who, as it will be seen, was fast taking the shape of Helen of Troy in the imagination of the sisters—who could tell if Edith Price would not reverse the part of Paris, and run off with Edward to Greece, or even to the world's end, while she was at Ascot? Yes; she was sure he would be lost to her if she went to Ascot, and she was resolved not to go if she could help it.

So there they all sat, sulking and looking at one another till the dressing-bell rang. In the mean time, Lord Pennyroyal talked indefatigably—agriculture with Sir Thomas; commerce with his cousin Marjoram; the army and the necessity of great reductions with Colonel Barker. Mr. Beeswing and Count Pantouffles were inseparable, as usual, though what such a clever man as Mr. Beeswing, Lady Sweetapple said, could see to please him in that empty-headed Count, she really could not tell. But they had many things in common. They belonged to the same club, mixed in the same society, often sat together at the same table, and as the Count declared Mr. Beeswing to be the most amusing Englishman he had ever met, so Mr. Beeswing always asserted that Count Pantouffles was the most instructive foreigner he had ever seen in English society. When they were both so satisfied with each other, who shall disturb their good-fellowship? Certainly not we, so we leave them as we find them, the very best friends in the world.

'Thank heaven,' said Harry to Edward, 'there's the gong for dressing! I never spent so dull an hour as this since tea.'

'Nor I,' said Edward. 'A cloud of dulness seems spread over the house. Perhaps it will be better after dinner.'

'I'm sure I hope so,' said Harry. 'Ditch-water is bright compared to the gloom of this house just now.'

Of course, when Amicia got upstairs she congratulated herself on the success of her scheme.

'How nicely it was succeeding when that horrid Lady Pennyroyal tried to spoil it by asking these girls to Ascot! However, I must make the best of it. I'm so glad I took them into my confidence about Edith Price. They are both as fluttered as partridges in snow, and know not which way to turn. In the mean time, Mr. Fortescue's visit will be over, and then—why, then I must fight the battle over again at Ascot. As for Edith Price, I decline to think of her. She is nothing to me.'

Mrs. Barker remarked to her husband how kind Lady Pennyroyal was in persuading her husband to take a house at Ascot; and Mrs. Marjoram, at about the very same moment, informed Mr. Marjoram that she wondered his cousin could be such a fool as to let Lady Pennyroyal spend a mint of money in taking a house for such folly and wickedness. 'There are a hundred poor Christian societies which have just had their May Meetings, that would have been glad of the money. And then to talk of waste in putting two lamps of sugar into one's tea! It's positively disgusting. I hope it will rain hard all the race-week.'

As to Florry and Alice, their sentiments were not so fierce against Lord Pennyroyal. Florry was pleased enough to go, and Alice wasn't; that was about the upshot of the whole story. If it had not been for Edith Price and Lady Sweetapple, they would have been delighted at the certainty in the one case, and the chance in the other, of meeting Harry and Edward at Ascot. But they made the best of it. They took one another into their arms, and kissed each other over and over again. Florry congratulated Alice on her victory over Edward, and Alice was certain that Florry was just as successful with Harry.

'If it wasn't for these ups and downs, dear,' said Florry, 'life would be too smooth, and we should think it heaven, instead of a vale of tears, as Mr. Rubrick tells us it is, at least once every Sunday.'

In due time the gong sounded, and down they all went. It is very hard, no doubt, some sensation readers will say, that there has not been a single drop of blood shed in this story all through these chapters. This is anything but one of those transpontine dramas of which the play-bills announce, 'Come early! Seven murders in the first act!' We quite admit the imputation. We are not fond

of blood. We daresay many another writer would have broken Lord Pennyroyal's or Sir Thomas Carlton's neck down that slippery black staircase, up and down which every one of our characters has had to pass ever so many times every day. In this way Florry and Alice might have been both heiresses with half a million each, and Harry and Edward might have run off with them the very evening that Sir Thomas fell downstairs and broke his neck, returning, of course, towards the end of the story to make it up with Lady Carlton, and to receive her blessing, after they had broken her heart. She would then have died in peace, and the Carlton property, both personal and real, would have been divided between the young ladies and their lovers. Much in the same way, Lord Pennyroyal might have had his throat cut by Mr. Beeswing's French valet, and this blame might have been cunningly thrown on old Podager, who might have been tried, convicted, and executed, unless the Frenchman—a thing which Frenchmen seldom do—had repented, and confessed the crime just as the unhappy Mr. Podager was about to be privately hanged in Horsemonger-lane Gaol. So, as we have said, Lady Sweetapple might have poisoned her old lover in a cup of coffee, and the blame might have been thrown on Florry Carlton, who might have been actually hanged while Amicia married Harry, and lived happily till quite the end of the story, when she would have divorced herself from her husband, and confessed her crime—to a priest; the penance imposed being, to marry another husband as fast as she could. But this is a story in which, though we hope there is no lack of incident, there are no great crimes; only the feelings and passions which might produce them, were not our actors restrained by law and the rules of society.

It is not at all surprising, therefore, to find Lady Sweetapple and Florry meeting before dinner as though they were the best of friends, though we all know that Lady Sweetapple would have killed Florry if she could, and that Florry, as she often said, would have been very glad to scratch Amicia's eyes out. And this is just the gain we have in this nineteenth century by living in a civilised land. Crime, as we all know, is almost extinct in the upper classes, whatever vice may be, and it is only the lowest dregs of society who poison their husbands by arsenic, and batter in their skulls with a hammer. Of course—who can doubt it?—we are much better than our forefathers.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. SONDERLING'S WEDDING-CLOTHES, AND MR. BEESWING ON DINNERS.

WHEN the visitors assembled in the hall before dinner, there can be no doubt that the hero of the evening, so far as his attire went, was Mr. Sonderling. When he reached home, he had resolved, as

you know, that he would wear those wedding-clothes which his mother had got ready for his marriage with Amicia more than ten years before, and which he had faithfully kept and dusted ever since. In a strange sort of infatuation, he thought they were still quite new because he had never worn them. He forgot that clothes, like persons, grow old by keeping. They were out of fashion, too, as well as almost threadbare. The coat had no collar, very narrow sleeves, no lap-tails, and great lappets behind—where the pockets were, it ought not to be. In vain the faithful Gretchen, less stubborn than her master, told him that this '*rock*' was not now the '*mode*.'

'It was sewn for my wedding-coat by my sainted mother,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'and I will wear it.'

When Gretchen again protested, he was angry, and would wear—'*ganz bestimmt*.'

'Now bring the breeches, the *beinkleider*,' he said; 'let me see them.'

'*Ach! du lieber!*' said Gretchen with a groan, as she handed down that article of dress which a certain edition of the Bible says was made originally out of fig-leaves.

'Of a truth they are very handsome,' said Mr. Sonderling, as he inspected that not very romantic part of man's attire.

'*Hübsch sind sie gewiss nicht*,' said old Gretchen, who minded the stitching of them, diametrically contradicting the assertion of her master.

Mr. Sonderling's wedding-coat had been blue, and blue also were his *beinkleider*; but they were very unlike the *beinkleider* of the present time; they were loose and baggy, and plaited up at the waistband, and they were rather short at the foot.

'Quite out of fashion these, too,' said old Gretchen, shaking her head; 'and the vest! dear me!'

'They shall be the fashion to-night,' said Mr. Sonderling, as he unfolded the waistcoat.

That too was a remarkable garment. In colour it was yellow, and in cut antediluvian. Noah might have worn it when he went to the Ark on that very rainy day, or Moses in the wilderness. It was straight cut, without a collar, very short in the waist, so that to call it a waistcoat was an absurdity. It had enormous pockets, thrust up—Frau Sonderling, his sainted mother, must have meant her son to carry all the capital of the tobacco fabric about him in his pockets—and the pockets had enormous flaps to protect them.

'This, too, is lovely,' said Mr. Sonderling, as he laid it on his bed. 'Now I shall soon be ready,' he said; and then he set to work to dress himself. It was some time before he had completed his toilette to his satisfaction; but at last, in that strange garb, with a shirt the collar of which cut his ears, he started in the fly from the Carlton Arms, old Gretchen holding up her hands in amazement.

ment as he departed, and in due time reached the Hall, and presented himself to the astonished company.

'What a stunning get-up!' said Harry to Edward. 'Just look at old Sonderling.'

But Mr. Sonderling had no eyes for any but Amicia; and, though they had not long to wait for dinner, he had contrived to tell her that the clothes in which he stood were those in which he had once meant to lead her to the altar.

'What a pity it is that we all change so much!' said Amicia. 'Even our clothes change. What, then, shall we say of our minds?'

'My mind is unchanged,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'As I was in the beginning, so I am now.'

So they all went in to dinner, and how they sat is not exactly recorded. They were not very lively; and though Florry sat next to Harry, and Alice to Edward, there was very little except the most formal conversation between them. The black shadow of Edith Price—the dark young lady in the background—weighed upon the minds of the young ladies; and Harry and Edward passed the time in wondering how it was that their neighbours were both so cold.

The expense of the conversation, as the French say, fell upon Amicia and Mr. Beeswing. It is believed that Count Pantouffles said nothing at all. He was lost in amazement at Mr. Sonderling's attire, and looked at him through his eyeglass as though he were inspecting some strange animal.

Lord Pennyroyal talked a great deal to Lady Carlton, and so did Sir Thomas to Lady Pennyroyal; but except the fact that the young ladies' visit to Ascot was finally settled between the four, nothing is known as to their conversation.

But as in a great race a good horse singles himself out and makes all the running, from start to finish, winning in a canter, so in this dinner the meed of praise must be awarded to Mr. Beeswing. Mr. Beeswing was not a glutton, but he was an epicure. He was a gourmet rather than a gourmand. He never over-ate himself, but he knew the reason of every dish, and he had mastered the whole natural history of the gastric juice. When Amicia asked him what he thought of some coming dish, he said he thought it very good, and then he burst out in a flood of culinary knowledge.

'I think,' he said, 'I might write a very amusing book, called *The History of Digestion*. No one can possibly know what bad cooking is who was not at a private school thirty or forty years ago. What had we for breakfast? Bread-and-milk. Good bread and bad milk, with some thin bread-and-butter. We had it at seven, and after that we had nothing till one. Then we had dinner—pudding first and meat afterwards. Rice-pudding with great lumps of fat in it, or suet-pudding all fat. ies in the summer and autumn

had currant and cherry tarts, and apple tarts, but these always came after the meat. The meat was not bad; but as a fair woman is ill-dressed is often ugly, so the best meat, if boiled to rags served up raw, is disgusting to the palate even of a healthy boy. Sometimes, too, we had bubble-and-squeak. O that dish! What bubble-and-squeak? Some of you have only heard of it metaphorically, as applied to two distinguished brothers, late members of Parliament, thus nicknamed from their voices. But with us bubble-and-squeak was no metaphor, it was an awful reality. Still I have told you what bubble-and-squeak is. Well, it is the remains of a badly corned cow-beef cut into slices, and fried with greens or cabbage. I believe that it contains about five parts of nutriment to forty-five of innutritious matter. All the good has been boiled and boiled out of it; it tastes like leather and smells like cabbage; and a man, if he has good teeth, no taste, and no sense of smell, may eat it for half an hour, and rise up taking nothing away with him except indigestion.'

'I should not like that bubble-and-squeak,' said Count Panfili. 'I should not like him at all.'

'I hope I may never make his acquaintance,' said Mr. Sonder-

'Another dish,' Mr. Beeswing proceeded, 'was boiled mutton. It, too, is in itself not a bad thing. I say this to show that I am not dainty. I can eat anything, so that I like it, and it be good. Well know there is a physiological objection to boiled mutton. George III. was always eating it, and went—we know where. When in a private I went to a public school,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Here the food was better, and the cookery much the same; we had the best meat in the world, worst cooked; but, trusting to a good digestion, I passed through this stage of my existence safely. I had not yet done with English cookery. I went to Oxford. There the conspiracy against my constitution became very serious. It extended throughout the twenty-four colleges and halls which make up the University. In every kitchen there was a cook more or less plotting against my life and liver. In those halls there are neither soup nor fish, save for Dons. For the rest, all over the University were these quarter of a hundred cooks continually at work in roasting and boiling thousands of pounds of meat daily, and serving it as nearly unfit for food as possible. Fortunately there is heaven above us and a hell below us. To the last these unprofitable cooks must surely come. To the first it is no doubt due that there is a Providence which shapes cooks' cooking, in spite of all their careless handling, and so Oxford undergraduates—with the appetites and gastric juice of ostriches—escape unscathed for the most part. As for the weakly, they are plucked at some time of their career by the refusal of their stomachs to do any more work,

and they retire to their maternal parent's abode only to fall under the tender mercies of a good plain cook—a fiend of whom we shall have to speak at large hereafter.'

At this period of Mr. Beeswing's disquisition, Mrs. Marjoram pricked up her ears and declared to Colonel Barker, that 'it was all very well to abuse plain cooks, but we could not get on without them.'

'Behold me, then,' continued Mr. Beeswing, 'hardened by constant encounters with the enemy, able to eat and digest anything, and a Bachelor of Arts. Here something befell me which opened my eyes wide, and showed me the brink of the awful precipice on which I stood. Life is short; I was twenty years old, and did not yet know what good cooking was. I look back on my position with horror. Had I been cut off then, had I perished in my ignorance—I cannot call it innocence—what would have become of me? Would the teeth of my grinning skull have ever known that there was a use for them beyond grinding tough beefsteaks, that the destiny of dentition is quite other than that of the nether millstone? Something happened to me, I say. I went abroad; I wandered about to see the world and its cookery. At first through Germany, the land of *Sauerkraut* and *Dampfnudeln*, of *Kalbsbraten* and *Pfannkuchen*. Here I lost my English *Wasserküche*, and fell into a region of greasy soups, and vegetables swimming in butter. I swallowed so much adipose matter, that I became as waterproof as a pair of Wapping fishing-boots, and ate veal enough to deprive the world of countless oxen.'

When Mr. Beeswing spoke of *Dampfnudeln* and *Kalbsbraten* the eyes of Mr. Sonderling glistened, and he said in German, '*Dorthin möchte ich so gern gehen.*' But Mr. Beeswing went on:

'Still I could find no rest for the sole of my foot. The pit of my stomach was still an aching void. It had not fulfilled its destiny; its day was still to come. On I went across the Baltic to Sweden, seeking comfort and finding none, till I went to stay in the house of a friend who had a good French cook. When I say "good," I do not mean "virtuous." That excellent *artiste* was as virtuous as most Frenchmen, and there his virtue ended; but he was, *par excellence*, a good cook. He was a born genius, and he had been waiting for me, and until I came his worth was unknown. As a rigid Calvinist, I believe that we had been predestinated to meet, that there was no free-will in the matter. He could cook anything and everything, from a potato up to an elk, or even an elephant, and whatever he put his hand to was excellent. Some people fancy cooks to be lazy and indolent. They are no such thing. Your real good cook should be of an enterprising mind. On occasion he should be ready to do all and dare all. He should be of the spirit to march to Moscow, or to conquer India bravely, all for the glory

a new-made dish. In competition with an old German nurse in the family he even condescended to make black-puddings, and he ate her.'

'If I could only have one of those black-puddings now I should be so happy!' said Mr. Sonderling. But this ejaculation was lost on Mr. Beeswing, who went on:

'I was not destined to spend all my life in that land of Cockayne. I longed, after a time, for my own country, and came back to England. In spite of her water-cookery and good plain cooks, I loved her still. There I did not take what may be called the second of the two great steps a man makes in life. The first is being born. But if birth is the first great step out of the warm past into this cold and comfortless world, marriage is the second, and that most of us believe is involuntary. I think very often a man has very little will or voice in the matter; but I am not going to discuss the matter, I have no time; some day I may write a book on it, till then the question must sleep. At present I am only concerned with the seriousness of marriage, which some people fancy is as sweet as sugar-candy. So I say too, but then it is twice as sticky: you can't wash marriage out of your mouth with a cup of hot water; you must swallow it, or it will choke you. But, again, I am not going to discuss the seriousness of marriage on the side of its durability. It may be very well, as some propose, that marriages should be like leases, for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, at either party's option. If men were wise they would jump at such an arrangement, which would be all on their side—like so many other arrangements in this men-ridden world; but I say at once, I will not listen to such a proposal. That is not the serious side of marriage which I am about to consider. What decided me not to marry was quite another thing. It is, that if you marry, you must have a cook. I suppose that you are not as a Frenchman who drags his wife out in the cold every night to eat her dinner, even though she have the rheumatism. If you marry, then, you must have a cook. Think of that "*Respite Coquinam*." Consider the kitchen, wedded man, and tremble. You can dine at the club? Even if you do, will you escape the cook? Know this—Death, the taxgatherer, and the Cook are the three things no man can shirk. And after all, what is a club cook?—always excepting Francatelli, and he is no longer a club cook—nothing more than a domestic cook magnified, with all the faults of the family animal. Besides, what are you to do when you have a cold, or the gout, or when you fall downstairs and break your leg? No; take my advice: if you marry, dine at home like a man, and have a cook. Some people talk as if children were the curse of life; they "idly fable," like the Pelagians; cooks are the curse of life. If they are good at cooking they are bad at everything else—drunkards, gadabouts,

backbiters, dram-drinkers, and suchlike. Well, but you will have a virtuous cook. All I can say is, then you will never have a morsel fit to eat. Nothing is more true than that morality covers in cooking a multitude of sins. I know many families who have virtuous moral cooks, worthy creatures, who are thoroughly trustworthy, but I make it a point never to dine with them. I would prefer to dine in a house where there is a wicked cook, or possibly wicked cook, who can send up a good dinner. Just think, for a moment,—how can you expect to combine two most impossible things, virtue and cooking? If you know a virtuous person, cleave to them with all your heart and soul; and if you know a good cook, cling to her with all your gastric juice; but do not expect to find both combined in one and the same woman.'

Again Mrs. Marjoram protested to Colonel Barker that she knew many good plain cooks who were very virtuous, but Mr. Beeswing continued, unmoved:

'Here, too, arises another curious question: which is rarest in cooks, virtue or cookery? Without doubt, cookery; and that is the reason why mistresses, finding they cannot get good cooking, fall back on a good character. "My dear, this soup is water, the ox-tail in it is like a rope's end, and the carrots and turnips swim about in it unboiled. It cannot have been on the fire five minutes." "Very true; but it is not unwholesome to you who can digest it; and then Mrs. Rawdone is such a good trustworthy woman—in fact, she is a real treasure."'

'I suppose,' said Amicia, 'married men who have bad cooks often dine out.'

'Of course,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'they are great diners-out; all men with bad cooks are. If you see or hear of a man who will not dine out, don't be deceived by any tales of his domestic habits. It is not the bosom of his family that he cares for, but his own digestion. He may talk of his babes and sucklings, but it is really his beeves and fatlings that he thinks of. Be sure, too, that he has a good cook. Why should he dine out? Why go three miles in town, and it may be ten in the country, to seek for something which he has at his elbow? I say, to seek; for he is not likely to find, at the end of his three or ten miles, the end of his ambition—a well-dressed dinner. But, as I have said, I am not married, and I dine out. Day after day I seek after a vain shadow. Friend after friend asks me, and I go. I dine anywhere, and with any one. Alas, how seldom is my reasonable self-love satisfied! I know them all—Tyburnians, Belgravians, Paddingtonians, the dwellers in Berkeley and Grosvenor Squares, and the parts of Mayfair about Piccadilly. Even to Fitzroy and Finsbury Squares have I penetrated; and once, allured by the bait of a banquet, I went down beyond the great and perilous desert of Baker-street, and dined at the foot of Primrose

ill. Jews, Greeks, Turks, Infidels, Frenchmen, Germans—I have tested the food served up to all the nationalities in this Babel, and found them almost all wanting in that first essential, a good cook. Were those women all virtuous? I trow not. Some of them must have had a few sparks of that divine fire which raised Prometheus, whom I claim as the first cook, to the rank of a demigod. Why, then, have I not found it? Because, in ninety-nine cases of a hundred, these hosts of mine had no business to try to give the dinners which they set before the guests. That is the true reason, and the fault is more with the masters and mistresses than with the cooks. In fact, the bad-dinner-giving world is divided between those who can afford, and won't give a good dinner, and those who will try to give a good dinner, and can't.'

At this point of Mr. Beeswing's 'History of Digestion,' Lady Arlton began to gather up her gloves.

'Dear me,' said Amicia; 'are we ladies going? You must promise to come and finish it, dear Mr. Beeswing, as soon as you can rejoin us.'

So the ladies went; and claret came and went, and coffee came, and then the men betook themselves to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN WHICH MR. BEESWING CONTINUES HIS 'HISTORY OF DIGESTION.'

MR. BEESWING was so full of the story of his digestion, that he was not long before he found himself at the side of Lady Sweetapple, whose policy now was to let the dose of poison which she had so cleverly given to Florry work through her veins, and who was therefore quite ready to listen to Mr. Beeswing. On her other side was Mr. Sonderling, in his strange garb, as ready a listener to what Mr. Beeswing had to say.

'First and foremost,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'of all who can afford and won't give good dinners is the Dean of Dunderhead, that well-known dignitary of the Church of England, who, by his stinginess both in meat and drink, sent his guests hungry and thirsty away; but, as he has been sufficiently tormented in another place, I only mention him and pass on, with the remark, that if one of your old aboriginal deans will not give good dinners, what, in the name of all the deans and chapters in the world, is he fit for? But there are greater sinners even than deans in this world of bad dinners. I have said before that I have dined with men of all classes, and one of the worst dinners I ever had was with a duke. It was a long time ago, and his grace has long since descended to the vaults in which his ancestors repose, after their long lives of idleness. It was not so much that the food or the wine was bad, as that no pains were

taken about anything. Yet it was meant to be a very grand entertainment in a most noble palace. The guests were numerous, and among them were many distinguished foreigners. What spoilt the feast? The duke's insufferable pride. First of all we were ushered into a room, where we waited like sheep in a pen. The duke and duchess will come soon, we thought; but time went, and no member of the ducal family appeared. At last, to our dismay, as we blushed for our English duke, and to the great disgust of the distinguished foreigners, a pair of folding-doors at the end of our room were thrown open, and discovered a spacious hall, at the farth end of which we descried the whole ducal family of — standing on a sort of dais, towards which a groom of the chamber motioned us to approach. Some of us, who felt that we had been caught in a trap, would have turned tail and run away if we could; but we could not, and so we moved on with the crowd. But we were not allowed to bask for even a moment in the sunshine that surrounded the Duke of —. When we were half-way up the hall another set of folding-doors was thrown wide open at the other end, and a butler or house steward, or whatever his name may be, advanced to the duke and said solemnly, "Dinner is served, your grace." As soon as he heard the words, the duke gave his arm to the duchess, much in the same way as Solomon might have led out the Queen of Sheba, and the ducal pair glided out before us through those folding-doors, followed by the members of their family in order of age, leaving us and the distinguished foreigners to follow in their wake, streaming out very much like the tail of a comet. When we reached the banqueting-room, it was only to find the ducal family of — sitting serenely, like the gods of Epicurus, at an upper table, which was placed across the hall, and was a step higher than the long table below the salt, at which the distinguished foreigners were expected to sit. What the gods at the cross table had to eat and drink was quite beyond our ken. We were as completely cut off from the family of — as a Spartan helot from the nectar of Olympus. All we could say was, that they seemed to be enjoying themselves. As for our dinner, it was not bad in itself, but badly and carelessly served. But had it been worthy of Brillat-Savarin himself, it should not have found it good; for was it not evident that we had only been invited to swell the pride and pomp of the Duke of — who no more cared for our company than if we had been New Zealanders or Patagonians? We need hardly say that we had a hard time of it, keeping our distinguished foreigners in good-humour. On one side of us we had the astronomer of the Emperor of All Russia, and on the other a learned mathematician who stood in the same position to the Emperor of the French. They were both good fellows, and gastronomers as well as astronomers, both quite alive to a joke; but really this banquet was past a joke. "My E

peror," said the Frenchman, "sometimes commands me to dinner, and when I obey the command, I find him as pleasant and sociable as any other man in the world; but as for this Duke of —, who is he, and what has he done, that he should so insult me?" Next it was the Russian's turn—"I too have been at Zarzeo Zeloe, and the Winter Palace, and Oranienbaum, on a visit to my most gracious master, the Emperor of All the Russias; and never have I been treated as this day by the Duke of —. Who is he, this Duke of —, that asks men of science to dine with him merely to mock at them?" What could we say except that the manners and customs of the Duke of — were plainly brutal?

'What a bear that Duke of — must have been!' said Amicia.

'But as all things have an end,' said Mr. Beeswing; 'so too had that dinner. When it was over, the duke and duchess and the rest of the ducal family retired to their private apartments. As for the guests and the distinguished foreigners, the groom of the chambers was commanded by his grace to show them round the state apartments, which were lighted up for the occasion; but neither Raphael, nor Rubens, nor Sir Joshua, nor rare books and china and furniture, could wash away the original sin of pride, which converted what might have been a noble entertainment into an occasion of heartburning and disgust. Most of the distinguished foreigners shook the dust off their feet as soon as the ducal family retired, and ordered their flies. As we left the palace the distinguished French astronomer consoled himself by humming, "*Marlbrook s'en va-t-en guerre*," a song which I have often remarked embodies a Frenchman's conception of all that is insulting to an Englishman; and so we fled the palace of the Duke of —, who ought to have given us a good dinner, and yet managed not to do it.'

'I will try not to dine with that Duke of —,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'when I meet him in the Elysian Fields.'

'That was the case,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'of those who can and won't give a good dinner; that is to say, of those whose means enabled them to do so: but what shall we say of those who will try to give good dinners, and ought not? The Duke of — had everything at his command but the will, and he signally failed; but can one give a good dinner with the will without the means? Alas! as many are the poets of whom the world knows nothing, so many are the dinners which ought never to be given. What right has any man on a moderate income to invite me to meet fourteen or fifteen fellow-sufferers in a room which can barely hold ten, and that too in the dog-days? What right has he to ruin himself for a month to make us miserable for three hours? Why are we to sit suffocated at one end of his dining-room, or with our backs out of window at the other, merely to gratify his desire to give a party? Will his pride heal my rheumatism if I catch one? Why should I

swallow his muddy soup, his parboiled salmon, his flabby messy *trées*, his underdone joint, his muscular chickens, his soppy sod vegetables, his domestic pastry, and all the rest of his gastronomic abominations fetched from the pastrycook's, because he wishes me "to meet a few of his friends"? Pride is at the top and bottom of these entertainments. If he wants me to meet his friends, why does he not ask me in a Christian way? Let him next have a series of rehearsals—strictly private performances—before his wife and children, and then, when he has got his cook perfect at four or five dishes, let him ask six friends, he and his wife making eight to come and dine. Let there be a good soup or broth—Scotch broth to my mind, in the summer, and good ox-tail soup in the winter, and salmon in the summer, and cod in the winter. No *entrées*, then, to say, not at first: then a joint. After that, in the summer, where there is no game, a mayonnaise of chicken, and in the winter a brace of partridges or grouse. After that, one sweet. For wine, sherry and claret, with a bottle or two of better growth after dinner. Most women think that all wine would be port if it could; so for the sake of their weak natures, let them have a bottle; but let no man touch it. Also, if any man after dinner, in a house where claret is good, dares to eat even one sweetmeat, or even a scone or biscuit, let him be instantly turned out, and never asked to dine again. If to this bill of fare good company be added, though I quite admit the difficulty of finding eight genial spirits, I think I can promise the guest a happy evening. If there be not good company where, I ask, is the use of asking people to eat? Why cannot they eat at home? The New Caledonians, indeed, as the French *pour se délasser*, occasionally eat their wives, and one chief of the tribe had eaten seven helpmeets. No wonder the French admiral in his report to the Minister of Marine, adds in a note, "It does not appear that divorce has yet been introduced into New Caledonia."

'I do not think I should have made a good wife in New Caledonia,' said Amicia.

'Of course not,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'You would have been quite thrown away.'

'I am sure I wish she had been born and married there,' said Florry to Alice, 'and eaten too, instead of coming to trouble me here.' But Mr. Beeswing went on:

'Of all savage customs, dining alone is the most brutal. To dine without talking, moodily and monotonously, is a practice worth imitating in New Caledonia. Yet many civilised men do it daily at their dinner-table. This alone is an argument in favour of marriage which our clergy do not sufficiently insist on. Monophagy makes a man melancholy and unsocial. It is in our social system what monogamy was to the Hebrews and Egyptians—a cheerless and ridiculous thing.

a man dines alone, and has a good dinner, how can he praise it properly if he does not praise it on the spot? If he has a bad one, how can he abuse it effectually unless his blame is uttered at once? Suppose he goes up to another old fogey, and says, "Yesterday I had a very good dinner here." "O, had you? that's more than I had," is probably all the answer he will get. Or if he says, "I had a bad dinner here yesterday," his friend Grumps will only answer, "Very likely," and the whole affair will be as flat as soda-water two days after the cork has popped. But if he has a wife, and dines at home, as he ought to do, his "My dear, this soup is excellent, this fish first-rate; what good beef! you don't often see such partridges; this is really good pudding," will all fall on ears willing to welcome his praise; and his wife's pale face will be lighted up with a smile which the day after will be reflected on the cook's broad brow, making it shine like the harvest moon. What his words would be when he abuses his food, I forbear to say, because I have never known a husband so mean as to scold his wife for the cook's fault. No; it is well known the most that a man is capable of doing under such circumstances, is to dine out the next day at the club, and try to choke himself with a solitary dinner.

'Yes,' said Mr. Beeswing philosophically, 'man has been defined by philosophers to be a gregarious, a social, and a political animal; and in nothing does his nature come out so thoroughly as when he dines. For this he marries, because it is not good for man—except in a savage state, like that New Caledonian—to dine alone; for this he gives dinner-parties on small means, and ruins his liver because he is social, and not content with his wife's company; for this he passes beyond the social circle round his own mahogany tree, and goes to public dinners. Every good thing, we are told on high authority, is shown to be good by its excess on one side. This is eminently the case with dinners. Dinner is a good thing, even alone; better with your wife; and best with six or seven—with other good friends. Now comes excess, and this shows itself in public dinners. I wonder where the man now is who first invented them? Certainly, in a warm place. Of all horrid things, commend me to a public dinner. Dinner, that should be a calm soothing operation, to be carried on under the eyes of few witnesses; dinner—that balm to the weary, that food to the hungry, that pourer-in of salad-oil and Bordeaux wine upon the troubled spirit, that next best thing in the world after sleep—to be turned all at once into a scramble for sustenance; where everything is done in haste, and yet everything comes slowly; where all the hot dishes are cold, and the cold hot; where every one is chilly in winter, and roasted in summer; where no one knows his place, and where, when all is over, no one can find his hat; where, though last not least, after a man has stuffed himself at the unseasonable hour of

6 P.M., with the most indigestible messes, he may be called on by any idiot of a chairman to make a speech for some charity which he knows to be a swindle, or in honour of some sentiment uttered by some man who is confessedly one of the greatest impostors of the day! Let no one be beguiled into going to a public dinner on any pretext. If they make you a steward, pay your money, and don't go to the dinner. If they want you to speak, speak in the morning, or at noon, or at night; but don't destroy your digestion and your temper at once by postprandial utterances after ill-masticated food. The stomach, as we all know, like the Ten Commandments, is too serious a subject for trifling.'

'I did dine once at a public dinner,' said Count Pantouffles, who came in just then, having finished his unfailing cigarette. 'I did dine once at a public dinner, and the man who gave out the toasts called out, when proposing the health of the Ottoman Minister, "Gentlemen! pray fill your glasses. I propose another bottle of port for the Ottoman Minister;" at which my worthy colleague was much confused. In fact the toastmaster was intoxicated.'

'This was such a brilliant speech from Count Pantouffles that every one laughed; and if he had worn his hat he would have made them a most exquisite bow, but as it was he only smiled, and Mr. Beeswing went on:

'I have nearly done, and I have only a little left to say; but there is another class of dinners which, to my eyes, are worse than public dinners, because they take one unawares, and yet should be universally shunned. These are what I call Double Dinners. Just as some stars are double, and go in pairs, so some wicked people give their dinners in pairs, one following the other. As this is a serious question, and the sin by no means uncommon, let us consider it at a little length. Happy, indeed, were I, should any words of mine bring these guilty double-dinner-givers to a sense of their iniquity. As an abstract question of right, every man may give dinners two days running, and every day in the week if he likes it, and if the dinners are fresh day by day. Against such dinners there is no law; and, so far from setting my face against them, I know some people with whom I would dine, if they would only ask me, every day in the week. But the case is widely different, and the sin against society mortal, if the second dinner of the pair is given to eat up the scraps of the first day's banquet. But some one will say it is done from motives of economy. A very bad reason; so bad a one that we suspect any man who makes this answer to be mean enough to fall into this very sin. If a man gives dinners from motives of economy, by all means let him not give them at all. Let him ask his friends to tea or to luncheon, or to anything he likes, only not to economy in the shape of a double dinner. It is even an insult to be asked to the first of the pair. How can any man or

right feeling be happy, as he ought to be over his food, if he knows that, unless he restrains his appetite, there will not be enough broken meat for his inferiors, who are asked next day to pick up the scraps. Suppose he fancies another bit of that *fricandeau*—with what face can he ask for the dish to be brought to him again, when he knows that some one else has been asked to eat that very morsel the day after? He is, in fact, accessory to starvation before the fact. But, if this be the case with the guiltless guest, what shall I say of the guilty conscience of the mistress of the house? How anxiously she must scan the board, lest all her *entrées* should disappear before the voracity of the first day's guest! How carefully she must marshal the first day's invitations, putting the small eaters in the first rank, lest she should be eaten out of house and home the first day! No surer way of spoiling two parties than this system of double dinners can be conceived.

'But if this happens on the first day, how much worse is the scene on the second? I have said that this plan of double-dealing takes you unawares. The cards of invitation do not, of course, say that your day is the second of the feast. So the little innocents dress themselves for dinner, unconscious of their doom. I have for my sins been the victim of this cruel hoax; so that I well know what I say. As soon as I enter the house where the crime of a double dinner is about to be committed, there is something in the very atmosphere which betrays the fraud. Faded flowers on the landings, jaded waiters on the stairs, a stale smell of charcoal and fish everywhere. I know what is to happen before ever I get upstairs. There is the master of the house, honest fellow, blushing with shame. Side by side stands the shameless woman who, from motives of economy, has asked you to a banquet of scraps. She knows the injunction, "Do as you would be done by," and disobeys it. She is a Sapphira of the nineteenth century, and no apostles to punish her. Why did she ask me to a double dinner? Why did she rob the dogs of the crumbs? By and by the guests arrive, all second-class people: the family apothecary, who has attended Mrs. Economy when each of her ten little Economys was born; the family solicitor, Mr. Sheepskin; Mr. Rabid Rubric, the curate of St. Machutus; two or three country cousins; a neighbouring squire from Lincolnshire, where Mr. Economy's estate of Pennyfarthing lies; four or five nobodies, and yourself—that is all. Mrs. Economy's attire has already told the ladies, who have a keener sense than men in such things, what they have to expect. No one would wear such a dirty dress, such filthy gloves, and such tawdry trimmings except at the second of the pair of double dinners. The conversation is in a low whispering tone, as if a nun were about to take the veil. No one dares to mention the weather. It is no time for trifling. At last your suspense is over. The butler, in an apologetic voice,

houses of Mulligatawny and Oressy, and the high contracting parties have already disagreed with one another. I am sulky, and don't like to taste it. "What! no soup?" screeches Mrs. Economy. "No, no, no," of double dinners always screech, and, when red hair was in vogue, they always had red hair. You growl out something about Mulligatawny not agreeing with you. I need scarcely say I don't mix rice with it. Next comes the tail of a salmon ingeniously turned on to its head: but all the prime parts and middle cuts were taken by the gods yesterday. Besides, it has been gently boiled again, and all flavour has departed from it. Talk of "twice-boiled cabbage" being "death;" twice-boiled salmon is perdition to the country squire now awakes to his humiliating position, and begins to swear; but just as a good round oath is popping into his mouth, he smothers it in his handkerchief, and so blows his steam out of his whale, through his nose. Then comes a ragged regiment of soldiers, all evidently the worse for service, some being so feeble that they can scarcely stand upright. In fact, I did once see two of them afflicted with paralysis, who, though supported several times by the pious hand of the butler, rolled over and over in utter prostration on the dish. I had not the heart to eat such cripples, and by-and-by I stand on one side. Then there was a dish of sweetbreads, consisting chiefly of mashed potatoes, and eked out with one or two kromeskis, presenting a strange amalgamation. It was set before me on the *menu*—for even double dinners have a *menu*—as "*Riz à la Kromeski*." What that might mean I neither knew nor cared. It might have been *Rez-de-chaussée à la belle écurie*, or blessed, but I would none of it. Next came a Timbale, and

with him came an array of pastry and confectionery, deeply scarred with the brunt of yesterday's battle. There was a half a jelly backing up half a blancmange, in one dish, both all of a quake lest their remaining halves should go to-day to that bourne whither their better halves had gone the day before, and never returned—at least, let us hope not. There a cake cleft in twain, with a great gap in the middle, whence all its life-blood, of jam and jelly, had already gushed,—a poor ex-sanguine ghost of its former self. And there were other sweets, on which the eye had but to gaze and pass them by. There were ramequins, or ramekins, or whatever may be the right spelling, palpably warmed up. Fancy a soufflet warmed up! When I add that the wines were execrable and the waiting bad, that there was no conversation, and that the repast was long, dull, nasty, brutish, and unwholesome, what more can we say against Mrs. Economy's double dinner, except that there are many Mrs. Economys?

'That was a very nasty repast,' said Amicia. 'But do you never have good dinners?'

'Do I never have good dinners?' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Well, a really good dinner, as a mere matter of meat and drink, is a rare thing. Sometimes the meat is good and the drink bad. Thus, though I do not know much of the Greeks, I have remarked with sorrow, of so sensible a race, that their drink is hardly equal to their meat; but then their meat is excellent. Once I dined with a Greek, who gave me sow's udder à la financière, a most exquisite, though rather cloying dish, which ought to have been washed down with *cœur de perdrix* champagne or chambertin, but he only gave us small beer. True, it was abroad, and in the middle of the day; but I lay awake for weeks afterwards, reflecting on the incongruity of the repast. But do I ever get a good dinner? Well, about five per cent of the dinners I am asked to are good; say twenty in the year, and I think myself lucky to find so many; but then these are dinners in houses,—they need not be great houses, for, as a rule, the greater the house the worse the dinner,—where the wine and food are equally good; where I know both the master and the mistress; where the servants know their duty, and are neither careless nor officious; where the company rarely outnumber ten; where no fool is invited save as a fool, and where there is a round table. But let every one who has tried it reflect on the difficulty of combining all these essentials to a perfect dinner-party, and he will agree with me that the wonder rather is, that I should find so many than so few in twelve months.

'And now,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'I have eased my mind, and this interminable disquisition on dining and digestion has come to an end.'

'Excellent! charming!' he said. 'Lady Sweetapple, may I have the honour of the first waltz with you?'

'Certainly, Count Pantouffles,' said Amicia, who thought that in giving the Count for the first dance, the pleasure she hoped for in dancing with Harry was only a pleasure deferred.

'Miss Carlton,' said Harry, 'may I dance the first waltz with you?'

'Yes,' said Florry. That was all she said.

'Miss Alice Carlton?' said Edward.

'Yes,' said Alice, 'with all my heart.'

By this time she had begun to think she was treating her Edward cruelly.

'If it were not for that provoking Miss Price,' she murmured, 'how happy I should be!'

These six made up all the young people, unless you reckon Sonderling as young, which was the light in which he regarded himself.

'Whenever one of you has fatigue,' he said, 'I am ready to wait.'

Poor fellow! it was rather hard that he, the originator of the idea 'Let us dance,' should have been left out in the cold as the dancing began. But you all know it's only the way of the world. No great inventor ever profits by his theory. Some else puts it into practice, and makes his fortune while the inventor starves. The treatment of Mr. Sonderling was therefore perfectly natural, and we beg you will not say a word about it. Look at him, how he sits resigned in the ring of spectators, quite content to wait his time, and reflecting, as he himself will tell you, many things.

There was no want of music. The piano was excellent—one of Erard's best. Lady Carlton, Lady Pennyroyal, Mrs. Barker, even Mrs. Marjoram could play what Mr. Sonderling called 'nice music,' and so there was no occasion to stop the dancing for fear the musician might get tired.

The first couple off were Amicia and the Count Pantouffles. Here let us correct our injustice and atone for a fault. Besides the exquisite art of bowing, Count Pantouffles waltzed beautifully. It seemed to come naturally to him, just as when you saw him bow he saw at once that a true bower is born, and not made. He held himself so well; and, more than that, held his partner so well; not clinging, or clutching, or clinging to her; and he danced in such good time, and so smoothly and gracefully, it was a joy to waltz with him, and even to behold him.

'How delightful!' said Amicia, after they had taken a turn or two. 'One would like this to last for ever.'

By this time Florry and Alice were also off. Both Harry and

Edward waltzed well, and many of their partners thought them perfection, but it must be confessed that Count Pantouffles surpassed them both. There was, in fact, no comparison between them. If both Harry and Edward waltzed smoothly and gracefully, what did that matter? Count Pantouffles was more smooth and more graceful; and in nothing did he show his mastery over the dance more than in the exquisite ease and grace with which he changed his step in the midst of a waltz, and spun his partner round in what Lord Pennyroyal—who knew no more of dancing than a cow—called ‘the wrong way.’ That ‘wrong way,’ like back-skating, is the very perfection of waltzing, and if you don’t believe what we say, and have never tried either to skate backwards or to waltz ‘the wrong way,’ we advise you to try to do both, and then see where you will be. In the one case, certainly on the back of your head on the ice; and in the other, perhaps on your face on the slippery floor, with your unhappy partner under you. You are not to suppose, however, that Harry and Edward could not waltz ‘the wrong way.’ They both could, but they did not do it with the consummate skill which distinguished the waltzing of Count Pantouffles.

So the six went on, like so many dancing dervishes spinning round and round, whilst Lady Carlton played all imaginable waltz tunes. For some time Mr. Sonderling was content to look on, but when Lady Carlton began to play ‘An den schönen blauen Donau,’ it seemed as though his German flesh and blood could stand it no longer. He jumped up after the first few bars, and just as Amicia and Count Pantouffles paused for a moment, he called out:

‘For the will of heaven, Amicia, one turn!’

At this impassioned address, Count Pantouffles looked unutterable things at the German, of whose ridiculous attire he seemed for the first time fully conscious. As for Amicia, she only laughed in her sweet winning way, and said:

‘Not just yet, Mr. Sonderling; not just yet.’

Then she darted off as merrily and as beautifully as the waves of the blue Danube themselves.

‘Ach Gott!’ said Mr. Sonderling. ‘And to think she ought to have been my bride, and I her bridegroom in these very clothes!’

With these words he again retired into himself and reflected.

But we have never told you how Amicia waltzed. We beg pardon; we thought you would have known that she was as good a waltzer in her way as Count Pantouffles was in his. Not for nothing had she been brought up at Frankfort in that College of the Dead and Dumbs. In that famous free city on the banks of the Main, which if its waves are not as blue and beautiful as those of the Danube, is at least as famous for its excellent dancers, she had made herself mistress of the whole art of dancing in many a ball and many a lustgarten. She might not have liked to confess to Count Pan-

uffles, the descendant of a long line of diplomatists and do-nothings, how much she owed in that way to the ridiculous creature on whom her partner looked down with so much scorn; but if the truth must be told, Mr. Sonderling had taught Amicia most of her cunning in the waltz. You may imagine his feelings, then, as he sat by and saw her dancing the very steps he had taught her to the very same tunes to which they had danced long ago.

If such things will not make a man reflect, he must be past reflection, and Mr. Sonderling reflected on them accordingly. Ah, at 'schönen blauen Donau!' he well remembered when and where he had first heard it, and with whom he had first danced it. It was at one of the balls of the Frankfort Casino—a perfectly respectable society, Mrs. Propriety, and where, if it is still conducted with the respectability which distinguished it in former years, you may safely let your seven lemon-haired daughters dance when you spend a winter at Frankfort to learn languages, and improve their dancing. Yes, it was at the Frankfort Casino that he had first danced to that tune with Amicia 'Smeess,' and as he thought of it his eyes were filled with tears, 'Die Augen giengen ihm über,' like the old toper in Goethe's ballad, as often as he drained the golden goblet which his young love had given him. Yes, at the Frankfort Casino, about a month before he was to be married to Amicia, and when his poor old mother was stitching at the very clothes he had on. Did he feel like the 'ball' in Andersen's story? Not quite, but something like it. The top did not know the ball when they met after a long time; but when he and Amicia met, she knew him. He was in the same society and the same room with her, and was not his wedding-clothing as fine as the new-painted top? No; he was not so badly off as the ball.

As for Florry and Harry, they waltzed on and on, and said never a word. What could Florry say? Her tongue was tied about Edith Price, that mythical being, that fly in her ointment which Lady Sweetapple had thrown into it. Harry Fortescue was, must be confessed, rather sulky. Not that he was sulky by nature. Not at all; but on this occasion he thought he had a right to be sulky when Florry's manner had all at once changed.

Alice would have given the world to have had an explanation with Edward Vernon about Miss Price on her own account. She could have asked him outright what he meant by writing to a young lady in Lupus-street; but her tongue, too, was tied. Neither she nor her sister had reached that age which considers promises only given to be broken, and the most sacred oaths but binding so long as it suits one of the swearers to respect them. Did Amicia know they would be so loyal when she laid the injunction on them? We do not know; but she was older than the Carltons, and much better versed in the ways of the world. We do not, therefore, think she

had as much respect for a promise as they had. Remember, also, that to her too Edith Price was still that terrible dark young lady in the background, of whose relations with Harry Fortescue she had the greatest suspicion, simply because she was utterly ignorant as to what they really were.

At last Harry got bored with Florry's intolerable silence.

'I think I should like to stop,' he said. 'I am sure you must be very tired of me, Miss Carlton.'

'Not at all,' said Florry. 'At least, I mean I am not at all tired, if that's what you mean, Mr. Fortescue.'

'I meant what I said,' said Harry stiffly, and at the same time falling out of the dance and handing Florry to a seat at her mother's side.

'Are you tired, Count Pantouffles, as tired as Mr. Fortescue, I mean?' said Amicia to her partner.

'Yes, I am tired,' said Count Pantouffles. He was so stupid and selfish, he always said what he really meant, and so you could believe every word he uttered, if it related to himself or his comfort.

'Then we had better stop too,' said Amicia, rather piqued, for he danced so well, she would have liked him to dance on, as she said, 'for ever.'

But Count Pantouffles took himself at his word, and stopped, and so Alice and Edward were the only dancers.

'May I have the pleasure, Lady Sweetapple?' said Mr. Sonderling, as soon as she had rested a little.

'Yes,' said Amicia, 'as you asked me properly.'

'Ach! I had wrong,' said Mr. Sonderling. 'I did not ought to have called you "Amicia." But when I reflect on things that were, I cannot bear to think of things that are.'

'You had better forget all the painful past,' said Amicia, 'and remember only the pleasant part.'

'How can I,' said the unhappy German, 'when the pain recalls the pleasure and the pleasure the pain; and at last, the more I reflect, the more painful the whole becomes?'

'Shall we dance?' said Amicia, unwilling to philosophise with her old lover.

'With all my heart,' said Mr. Sonderling, and in a moment they were off to 'Erinnerung an Wien.'

Now if the truth is to be told, Amicia was quite right, as a mere matter of dancing, to take a turn with Mr. Sonderling. It was a very nice thing even for good judges to say whether he or Count Pantouffles were the better dancer. There was nothing that the Count could do that Mr. Sonderling could not also do; and strange to say, as soon as he began to dance, his movements were so graceful that one quite forgot his extraordinary attire. It was like getting accustomed to any ugly, unsent face, which at last one

ends by thinking beautiful. In Mr. Sonderling's dancing one quite forgot the clothes he wore, and one understood how right the ancient Greeks were, who, as far as we can learn, seldom wore much clothing when they danced.

And now Alice and Edward stopped only for a minute or two, and then the young ladies changed partners, and Florry waltzed with Edward, and Alice with Harry, but it was still the same dull silent work. They were as speechless as those Deafs and Dumbs at Frankfort of whom you have so often heard. To tell the truth, it was worse for Harry with Alice than with Florry; for poor Alice was beginning to think him a dangerous young man, who was leading her Edward away from her into the evil company of Edith Price. We are not sure that she was not downright rude to him; but at any rate Harry soon gave her up, and then Count Pantouffles begged for the honour of a turn, and she granted it, and away they spun.

It was a fine sight for a dancer to see the Count and Mr. Sonderling dancing against one another, and it is no little to the credit of the German that even Lord Pennyroyal declared that he quite held his own against the diplomatist. Poor fellow! no wonder he danced, for his heart was literally in his heels, and this waltz with Amicia was the one really delightful moment that he had spent since he returned to Frankfort only to find that Amicia 'Smeess' and her father the doctor had departed without making any sign.

So it went on, the pace getting more fast and furious, and Mr. Sonderling even eclipsing the Count in the *verve* and *aplomb* which he exhibited. Lady Pennyroyal had succeeded Lady Carlton at the piano, and when she was tired out, Mrs. Barker took her place. Mrs. Barker's playing was like an American striking oil in an unsuspected place. It was very good, and all the better because no one imagined her able to play at all. It was only the gallant Colonel who knew that, when he married his wife, she was not only the beauty, but the greatest performer on the pianoforte in the whole station; and when, after she had played several very pretty waltzes, though rather old-fashioned, she began the minuet from *Don Giovanni*, and played it with the greatest taste and feeling, Mr. Sonderling was enchanted, and even Count Pantouffles condescended to say that Mrs. Barker's music was 'charming.'

'You should have heard her when she was young,' said Colonel Barker proudly to Lady Pennyroyal; 'there was not a woman in India who could compare with her either on the harp or piano.'

'She has kept up her playing wonderfully,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'Such taste and such an exquisite touch!'

But the fanatical Mr. Sonderling was not content with hearing either Mozart's minuet or gavotte, he would dance them both with Amicia, who gave way to humour him, only saying:

'If I do, you will remember your promise, and say nothing about what passed between us, for you have sworn, you know.'

'I have, by Cupid,' said Mr. Sonderling, 'and I will keep my oat.'

Poor fellow! that final 'th' was still his shibboleth, and if we asked impertinent questions, or if we did not know what love is, we might ask what could possess a German to fall in love with a young lady whose very name he could not pronounce. Why did he not fall in love, for instance, with Miss Brown rather than with Miss Smith? Ah, why? you may well ask. The answer, I suppose, is, that a man falls in love with a woman, and not with her name. Besides, if he does not like it, or cannot pronounce it, that evil will be changed by marriage, which will put an end to the difficulty.

But to return to Mr. Sonderling.

'I will keep my oat,' he said; and then he and Amicia began to figure away in the stately minuet, to the delight of all beholders, and when they had danced that, they danced the gavotte, which still more enchanted the company.

'Thank you, thank you, Lady Sweetapple,' said Lady Carlton, 'and you too, Mr. Sonderling. How beautifully you both dance! This performance has been really the event of the evening.'

'Performance!' said Florry to Alice, 'that is just the word. She is always the same. Acting! that's the word. Last night it was a playhouse recital—"Lady Sweetapple's Declamation," as it would stand in the bills. To-night it is ballet-dancing. I shouldn't wonder if she had been on the stage at Frankfort, as well as at the College of the Deafs and Dumbs.'

'O, do hush, Florry!' said Alice; 'see, she is looking this way.'

'Yes,' said Florry, 'in her triumph after having tied our tongues with her trumped-up stories. Certainly, to-night she has carried all before her. Mamma, I can see, is getting quite fond of her.'

Here Lady Carlton said: 'Really, it is so late—long past twelve, I declare—we must go to bed. That is, we ladies, and the non-smoking part of the company. Dear Lady Pennyroyal, what do you say?'

'I had no notion it was late,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'We have been so amused. But I am quite ready to go to bed.'

So the ladies all went off to bed and left the smokers to themselves.

As Amicia glided up the black staircase, like a gleaming, shining snake, in her silks and satin and jewels, she said to herself:

'It will do. The stake was a bold one, but I have played it well, and I shall win. I will take him away before he has time to make any declaration; and when in town and at Ascot—these girls will not come to Ascot, I can see—he shall be mine.'

So she passed on into her room, soon to dispatch Mrs. Crump her bed, that she might think and soliloquise on what was now the sole object of her thoughts.

'He has been very cold to me to-day,' she said, 'very cold. Has he been warmer to any one else? To Florence Carlton? No, decidedly not. To Edith Price? At any rate he has not written to her' again. There was no letter to her in the dish. Not from him. Why did Edward Vernon write to her? That is a question which it is useless to ask. Why do young men write to young persons in Lupus-street? Lupus-street! When I used to study Latin with Karl Sonderling, I remember *lupus* meant a wolf. Is this Edith Price a wolf in sheep's clothing that is destined to carry off my gentle shepherd, Harry Fortescue? I wonder what she is like? Beautiful, of course. Two young men, and good-looking young men too, would not be both writing to her if she were not beautiful. Of course she is beautiful. I wonder if my looks will compare with hers.' As she said this, Amicia looked at herself proudly in the glass. 'I have no fear,' she said, 'if I can only get him away from this place. O, how I hate the place and the people in it!—all but Harry. If I marry him, I sha'n't let Harry be such friends with Edward Vernon. I don't like Edward Vernon. In fact, I don't like any one but Harry—the cold heartless Harry. I thought, though, he looked hurt when I danced with Karl Sonderling. Poor Karl! How good and faithful he is! He will keep his word, no doubt. I do not care if he will only keep it for a day or two longer. O, that horrid Lady Pennyroyal, to think of her asking the girls to Ascot! It was all to spite me, I am sure. Ascot is no place for young girls. They are more in the way there than in any other place. In fact, they are always in the way, I think. I must see if I cannot get Lady Carlton against their going to-morrow.'

So she went on, scheming and planning, till it was far on in the night. Pray excuse her, all you good people; she was only very much in love with Harry Fortescue, and resolved to have him if possible. The same thing has often happened before, and will happen over and over again. It is so natural in a young widow to wish to be married again, when she has set her heart on so nice a young man as Harry Fortescue.

As for Florry and Alice, they sat looking at one another in the old schoolroom ever so long, without saying a word, and then they both burst out crying:

'O, Florry!'

'O, Alice!'

'Dear, I feel so wretched,' said Florry.

'And so do I,' said Alice.

'He gave me an opportunity, and I never took it!' sobbed Florry; and then she told her sister how Harry had said he was

afraid she was tired of him, and she had seemed not to understand him.

'That was very silly,' said Alice. 'I wish Edward had been as kind to me. He said nothing in all that long time;' and then again she burst into tears.

'It's all that horrid woman and her Edith Price,' said Florry. 'I don't believe a word she said.'

'O!' said Alice with a deep sigh, 'you forget Edward's letter addressed to Miss Edith Price, No. — Lupus-street. That was proof in Edward's own handwriting that she exists and is no invention of Lady Sweetapple.'

'You must ask him all about it to-morrow, darling,' said Florry.

'O, but I can't; you forget our promise.'

'We never promised anything about Edward and Edith Price, but only about Edith Price and Harry,' said Florry sophistically.

'I think, dear, Edward is included in Harry in this case,' said Alice.

'Dear me,' said Florry, 'what shall we do? How long does Lady Sweetapple stay?'

'I'm sure I can't tell,' said Alice. 'Mamma bade me ask them for a few days. This is only Friday, and she has been here since Wednesday. She'll stay over Sunday, of course.'

'What an infliction!' groaned Florry. 'Suppose it rains. Then we should have Lady Sweetapple and a wet Sunday—two plagues in one.'

So the sisters alternately sobbed and talked; but they could take no comfort, though they sat up almost as late as Lady Sweetapple.

'I say, old fellow,' said Harry to Edward, 'you did not seem very lively, though you danced all that while with Alice.'

'Quite as lively as you looked, all the same,' said Edward. 'You looked as if you were going to be hanged.'

'It's no use denying it,' said Harry; 'there is a screw loose somewhere. Do you know, I think myself rather lucky in not being so far on as you. I feel as if a large bucket of cold water had been suddenly thrown over me.'

'My conscience is quite clear,' said Edward, 'and so is yours, Harry; and when that's the case the best thing to do is to go to bed and sleep one's troubles off.'

Acting on this wise rule, the two friends parted, and were soon sound asleep. Whatever may have happened to the ladies, Harry and Edward had their full share of rest that night at High Beech.

CHAPTER XL.

SIR THOMAS AND LADY CARLTON CONSULT.

BUT there was a much more important consultation that night. Late as it was, Lady Carlton was obliged to take her husband into counsel before they went to bed. When she had made up her mind he was a woman of decision; and as it was now made up, she went straight to the point.

'Do you like these young men, Sir Thomas?'

'What young men?' said Sir Thomas. 'Count Pantouffles—'

'Who would think of Count Pantouffles?' said Lady Carlton, rather impatiently.

The fact was, Sir Thomas Carlton was very sleepy and answered at random. He would much rather not have thought of any young men just then.

'I don't want to think of him,' said Sir Thomas.

'Nor do I,' said Lady Carlton. 'But I want you to think of Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon.'

'O,' said Sir Thomas, 'and what am I to think about them?'

'Do you think you like either of them well enough for your son-in-law?' asked Lady Carlton.

'That,' said Sir Thomas, waking up all at once, 'is a very serious question; but why am I obliged to think about it now?'

'Because I can see that Alice is very fond of Mr. Vernon, and he has half admitted to me that he is very fond of her.'

'He is a nice gentlemanly young man,' said Sir Thomas, 'and of very good family; but it really takes me very much by surprise to have to say off-hand, at this hour of the night, whether I like him well enough for my son-in-law.'

'Ah, but you know, Tom,' said Lady Carlton, 'love very often takes one by surprise, and in this case he has surprised all of us. Affection is a quick-growing plant, but here it has outstripped all my experience.'

'I am sure,' said Sir Thomas sadly, 'I never thought it would come to this, that I should have to part with my daughter, with my other eye as I call her, only because we ask a nice young man down here for a day or two.'

'Yes; but then you know that's just how nice young men and women come to like one another. If you don't want your daughters to fall in love with nice young men, you must ask none but the old and ugly to your house.'

'All this time,' said Sir Thomas, with the tone of a martyr, 'you have never told me what you think of having Mr. Vernon as your son-in-law. I should like to know your opinion.'

'You know, Tom,' said Lady Carlton, 'you have always said you did not look for money with your sons-in-law. If they had money, well and good; if they had not, you have enough for your daughter and her husband. What you would insist on was, that their choice should rest on a gentleman both by birth and education.'

'That is all very true,' said Sir Thomas, getting rather sleepy.

'Well,' said Lady Carlton, who was afraid her husband might drop off in his arm-chair before she had settled this very delicate question, 'well, so far as I am concerned, I am quite content with Edward Vernon for my son-in-law; so that is settled.'

'What is settled?' said Sir Thomas, jumping up with a start.

'I said I should be quite content with Edward Vernon for my son-in-law. I can see Alice has quite made up her mind to take him if he asks her—that is to say, if we give our consent.'

'Has he asked her?' said Sir Thomas, now wide awake again.

'Not quite,' said Lady Carlton; 'only half. But all lovers know, or ought to know, that in these cases half is quite as good as the whole.'

From all this the reader will see that Lady Carlton had watched closely the growth of Edward Vernon's affection for her daughter, and that she had already made up her mind that he would make her an excellent husband. In fact she was fond of Edward Vernon, and that walk home with him from the oak had quite convinced her that there was no time to be lost in speaking to Sir Thomas. She was a prudent mother, and acted on Bacon's maxim, 'Marry your daughters betimes, lest they marry themselves.' She saw it was time for her to step in and settle the matter, lest the young people should settle it for themselves. Nor let it be supposed that Sir Thomas, though very sleepy at that moment, was at all indifferent to his daughter's happiness. He was a wise man, and quite content, in this case, to see through Lady Carlton's eyes. How could he, spending half his time in the City or the train, have half the knowledge on the subject of Alice's affections that his wife possessed? And so, though he did jump up with a start at hearing Lady Carlton say, 'Then it is settled,' and though he pursued the inquiry a little farther for form's sake, he ended by coming round to his wife's side by declaring that Edward Vernon should have Alice if he asked for her properly, like a good boy.

'And now, my dear,' said Sir Thomas, 'do let us go to bed. I am so tired!'

'Ah, but you must sit up a little longer, Tom,' said Lady Carlton. 'I have another question to ask. How would you like to have another son-in-law?'

'I declare I don't understand what you mean. Surely one husband is enough for Alice.'

'e a goose, Tom,' said Lady Carlton. 'I mean, how e to have a husband for Florry?'
'nd for Florry!' said Sir Thomas. 'Lose both my once! Have both my eyes put out in one day! No; bear it.'

'you had to bear it, Tom? Suppose Florry fell in e one, and you refused, and she ran away?'
'ton has ever run away,' said Sir Thomas proudly; 'een too well conducted.'

'aid suppose, Tom; I did not say she ever would.'
'ould not, what's the use of supposing?'

'stranger things have happened,' said Lady Carlton.
'ill never run away,' said Sir Thomas; 'she has too

en,' said Lady Carlton, 'I'll put it in another way.
'ry fell in love with Harry Fortescue?'

'en,' said Sir Thomas, 'I should not expect her to
of the kind, unless Harry Fortescue first fell in love

'u would have no objection to him also for a son-in-
that second son-in-law of whom I spoke?'

'is-in-law in one night, just before going to bed!' ex-
thomas. 'It is really more than I can bear.'

'm,' said Lady Carlton, 'I did not say that Harry
s in love with Florry. What I fear is, that Florry is in

'akes it worse,' said Sir Thomas. 'If he is not in
' what makes you think that she is in love with him?
seen it.'

'have eyes where men are blind,' said Lady Carlton.
'ever told me a word, but I know she is in love with
s if she had told it me a thousand times.'

'it does he think of her?' said Sir Thomas.

'ot indifferent to her,' said Lady Carlton. 'He is in a
ecome fond of her. Perhaps, if it were not for some
night be as far gone as Edward Vernon, though he is
impressionable.'

'y, who is that some one else?' asked Sir Thomas.

'why Lady Sweetapple, of course. You do not mean
u do not see that she is fond of Harry Fortescue?'

'e I never saw anything of the kind,' said Sir Thomas.
'e said they were good friends, nothing more.'

'a say then is, that you are as blind as a beetle, Tom.
'o clear a case.'

't does he think of her?' said Sir Thomas.

'more than I can say,' said Lady Carlton. 'Some-

times I think he is taken with her, and then a coolness comes over him. I think, on the whole, that Florry would carry the day, if it were not for the advantages that every widow has.'

'And, pray, what advantages has Lady Sweetapple that Florry has not?' said Sir Thomas.

'There you are again, as short-sighted as ever. I see what you mean: you think because Florry will have a quarter of a million, if you choose to give it her, that she is better off than Lady Sweetapple. Pray remember that Lady Sweetapple is her own mistress; whatever she has is her own, and she has it outright. She has to wait for no one.'

'That is very true,' said Sir Thomas.

'But yet that is not what I meant by advantages,' said Lady Carlton. 'I meant the freedom which every widow has, compared with a girl like Florry. I meant that superior knowledge of the world and its ways which a woman like Lady Sweetapple must always possess when matched against an inexperienced thing like Florry.'

'I don't believe in any such thing,' said Sir Thomas doggedly.

'Believe it or not,' said Lady Carlton, 'you may depend upon it, what I say is true; and Florry has little chance with Harry Fortescue so long as Lady Sweetapple is by.'

'When will she go away?' asked Sir Thomas, relapsing into sleepiness.

'That is a question, I daresay, which Florry has asked a thousand times,' said Lady Carlton, 'but it is one we none of us can answer. We asked her, as we did all the rest, for a few days.'

'I always understood,' said Sir Thomas, 'that a few days meant five.'

'So it used,' said Lady Carlton, 'but they have only been here three. On Monday, I fancy she will go away; but of one thing I am quite sure—that Lady Sweetapple will not leave the house so long as Harry Fortescue is here. But you never told me what you thought of Mr. Fortescue.'

'I like him very well,' said Sir Thomas; 'in fact, I like him better than Edward Vernon. There is more in him.'

'Then you would not object to him also as a son-in-law?' said Lady Carlton, who knew that Florry's affection for Harry was at least as strong as that of Alice for Edward.

By this time Sir Thomas was getting desperate. He really felt as though he never should get to bed.

'Well,' he said, 'what I have said about the one, I will say about the other. If the girls' affections are engaged, and these young men are really fond of them, and show themselves worthy of them, I see no objection to both the marriages. As you know, we are above considerations of fortune. All I require in my sons-in-

law is, that they should be gentlemen by birth, character, and education.'

'There's a dear good man,' said Lady Carlton. 'What a shame to keep you sitting up so long when you are dying to go to sleep! How selfish of me! I won't tease you any more. But pray remember, if anything happens to either of our daughters—I mean of course if either Harry or Edward ask for them properly—you have given your consent.'

'Certainly, my dear,' said Sir Thomas; and in a few minutes he was sound asleep, after one of the most exciting conversations he had ever had with his wife at that late hour of the night.

So they were all asleep at High Beech. Mrs. Marjoram had forgot her scolding, and old Marjoram slept the slumber of the weary and the just. Colonel and Mrs. Barker snored in unison, and he no doubt revisited India and resacked the hill fort of the Ram Chowdah. Mr. Beeswing's sleep was easy and natural, as befitted the character of the man. Whether he returned to the story of his digestion, and ate any of those dinners over again on which he had dilated during the evening, is not known. At any rate, he was haunted by no bad dreams, and slept out the sweet summer night in peace.

As for Count Pantouffles, it is said that he always slept on his back. We know it is a position in which many men cannot sleep. They must turn over on their side; but Count Pantouffles was not one of those men. He could sleep anywhere and anyhow. We believe he could have slept with his head in a bag full of cayenne pepper and not felt it. He always said he never dreamt in his life. He had not imagination enough to dream. When he slept, he slept without snoring. He would have thought it beneath the dignity of a Pantouffles to snore. They are a very proud race, the Pantouffles; and as they are especially famous for doing nothing, they have never snored. They would have looked on it in the light of a nocturnal signal, and it would have degraded them at once to the condition of a watchman. If they had been geese, they would never have hissed, even to save the Capitol. So the Pantouffles never snored. 'Let day labourers and the sons and daughters of toil snore,' they said; 'it is a badge of servitude, and befits them; but our breath is free, and comes from unclogged throat and nostrils. We never snore.' So Count Pantouffles spent the night.

But what of Mr. Sonderling? How did that 'madman,' as Count Pantouffles called him after he went away—how did he spend the night? Very like a madman, we are afraid. For a long time he would not go home, but walked wildly about the chase, swinging his hands to and fro, and singing snatches of the songs he used to sing with Amicia Smith. The deer stood and gazed at him in

the moonlight, and the rabbits stayed their nibbling and frisking to stare at him as he passed. He looked so strange, they could not take him for a man, and they knew he was no beast of prey. So there he stalked about, exclaiming every now and then: 'She will yet be mine! Amicia! she will yet be mine!' And then he skipped and leapt for joy, verily believing that it was all the charm of his wedding-clothes that had won her back to him. Poor Mr. Sonderling! when he came to himself and looked at his watch by the moonlight, he saw that it was past two o'clock, and over his shoulder he saw the dawn. 'Ach!' he said, 'fairer than Aurora is she, my own Amicia;' and then he threw himself on the dewy turf, and left his imprint on the wet grass.

'I shall now return by me,' he said at last, meaning that he would return home. And home he went, running down the lime avenue, like a lunatic pursued by all the furies, till he reached his little house in High Beech village.

As he knocked, the faithful old Gretchen opened the door, with her 'Du lieber! where have you been, Mr. Sonderling?'

'Where have I been?' said Mr. Sonderling. 'I have been in heaven among the gods, and I have drank nectar and ambrosia, and she will yet be mine, Gretchen! she will yet be mine! Look at my wedding-clothes.'

'Alas!' said Gretchen. 'Come in, come in, Mr. Sonderling. I only see you have had a fall on the wet grass, and are like to catch your death of cold. Run up quick to bed, and I will bring you a basin of *Fleder Thee*'—elder tea, we should call it—'that is very good against a cold.'

So Mr. Sonderling crept up the creaking stairs to his narrow bed in his little room. But nothing seemed little or poor to him that night. He seemed to float on ether through golden clouds. For had she not smiled on him, his first love? and had he not given her a promise, and kept it? and would he not promise her anything, if she would only smile on him as she used to smile?

O, Amicia Sweetapple, born Smith, of how much fascination were you guilty in that month of June!

It was not long before the faithful Gretchen appeared with the *Fleder Thee*. And after Mr. Sonderling had drank it up and said, 'I find it very good, *Schlafen sie wohl, Gretchen*,' then he too turned on his side, like all the rest of the world, except Count Pantouffles, and was soon lost in dreams, in which he stood at last at the altar, and was actually wedded to Amicia Sweetapple.

'Dear Heaven!' said old Gretchen as she crawled downstairs, 'what fools men are! gentlemen just as much as other men. I'll bet a penny my poor master will never be married to Amicia Smeess, now that he finds her here a fine lady in England.'

Then she too, the dear good old thing, climbed up to her attic,

looked out for one moment at the mingled light of the moon and lawn, knelt down and said her prayers by her bedside, and soon even she was lost in slumber, and all the world at High Beech was at rest.

CHAPTER XLI.

EDITH PRICE'S ADVERTISEMENT.

AND NOW we are all at breakfast next morning, and seem much the better for our night's rest. Florry and Alice were young, and with the young the phantoms of the night are soon dispelled by the morning's sun. Amicia was radiant, in spite of her misgivings about Edith Price; for was she not nearer by another night to her departure and Harry Fortescue's departure from High Beech?

All the party had been at prayers, and Mr. Beeswing even congratulated Count Pantouffles on having become a Protestant, after attending family worship twice. For this he was taken to task, though in a very modified form, by Mrs. Marjoram, who told him it was not safe jesting with the errors of Rome.

'No more than it is with a hungry man,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Pray, dear Mrs. Marjoram, let me first eat my breakfast, and then I will dispute with you on theology to your heart's content.'

Lord Pennyroyal was particularly cheerful, and was ready to resume the discussion on sugar and sugar-beet with Lady Sweetapple if she wished it.

'No, I thank you, Lord Pennyroyal,' she said; 'I exhausted what I had to say on that subject yesterday. But if you would give me that outer sheet of the *Times* which contains the births, marriages, and deaths, and the ladies' second column, I shall be so much obliged to you.'

'Certainly,' said Lord Pennyroyal, handing her the paper.

So Lady Sweetapple began to read:

"At No. — Belgrave-square, the Countess of Balderdash of a son and heir."

'An heir at last,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'Well, I am glad. He has had five daughters running, and now she has got a boy.'

'I shall write to Balderdash,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'and ask for his vote for the Orphan Asylum. He will be in a good humour, and promise it at once.'

'I am sorry to say,' said Sir Thomas Carlton, 'his vote is already promised. He has given it to me.'

'What a bore!' said Lord Pennyroyal.

Then Lady Sweetapple read on:

"At St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, by the Bishop of Bullocksmithy, assisted by the Dean of Dunderhead, and the Rev. Rabid Rubrick, Annie, second daughter of Sir William Eatington, Bart., to the Hon. Catherine O'Gallagher, of Damdreary Castle, co. Mayo, Ireland."

'I am so glad Miss Eatington is married,' said Florry; 'but who is Mr. Mauther O'Gallagher? what is his father's title?'

'He is the son of Lord Killwordie,' said Lady Sweetapple, 'and rather a handsome man, except that he has a horrid brogue and is very prosy.'

'How I pity Annie Eatington!' said Alice; 'she deserved a better fate.'

'Is there any one dead?' said Lord Pennyroyal, who was always doing sums as to the amount of succession duty which this or that deceased person's heirs might have to pay.

'No one of any distinction,' said Lady Sweetapple. 'Let me see: they are all Huggins, or Muggins, or Jones.'

'Is there no Smith?' said Florry savagely.

'No, there is not,' said Lady Sweetapple, evidently not in the most serene of tempers.

'I thought,' said Florry, 'there was always a Smith in the deaths, just as there is always a gray horse to be seen at any hour of the day passing over Westminster-bridge.'

'There's no Smith,' said Amicia.

Then she left the deaths, having, apparently, had quite enough of them, and went on with her second column.

'Here's the usual advertisement for a young lady inclining to embonpoint, with a profusion of dark brown hair, dressed in a black silk skirt, and a blue satin petticoat, and a violet bonnet with scarlet flowers, who is supposed to have gone off with a young gentleman in a round hat. She is, of course, very distinguished in appearance, and has blue eyes and perfect teeth. Any one who can restore her to her distressed parents will be liberally rewarded.'

While the whole table round were laughing at this unfortunate young lady, Amicia was reading the next advertisement to herself, and had time to reflect on what was best to be done. In half a minute she had made up her mind that the best thing to be done was to read it all out very slowly, keeping her eyes fixed on Harry Fortescue all the while. It was, in fact, a pity that she had not two pairs of eyes, or that she had not a squint, and could keep one eye on Harry and the other on Florry Carlton; but she acted for the best, and stared at Harry Fortescue.

So she read out:

'"Lupus-street." What an odd name for a street, Lupus-street!'

This was to call attention to what she was going to read, and to let the laugh at the unfortunate young lady subside.

Then she went on again:

'"Lupus-street.—Mr. H. F e is requested to communicate at once with E. P. The cheque has not arrived."'

'Mr. H. F e! Why, I Harry,' said Mr.

Beeswing. 'How many dots are there between the "F" and the "e," Lady Sweetapple?'

'Seven,' said Amicia. 'But what an odd name Lupus-street is! Where is Lupus-street?'

'Let us settle the name first,' said Mr. Beeswing, who sat on the same side of the table as Harry, and could not see his face. 'Let us see: "F-o-r-t," that's F and three dots; "e-s-c-u," that's four dots, and the final "e." There we have Fortescue complete.' Then turning to Harry, and never thinking his arrow had gone home, Mr. Beeswing added:

'Why, Harry, who is E. P. with whom you are requested to communicate, and what's all this about the cheque?'

'I shall give no explanation,' said Harry, 'to any one about this matter. But if any one is curious, I will admit that the advertisement does refer to me, and that I must leave for town at once to inquire about it.'

Now we all know that Harry Fortescue's conduct in the whole of this matter was not only honourable, but noble and generous in the highest degree; but neither Amicia, nor Florry, nor Alice were in the possession of our knowledge, and therefore you may fancy what Florry's sufferings were when she saw Harry's handsome face working, and heard his words, which seemed to tell her that Edith Price was a reality, and that he was avowedly about to rush off to town to communicate with that young lady. She saw, too, Amicia's angry eyes now turned on her in malignant triumph—as much as to say, 'See, I told you nothing but the truth!' and so she could not control herself, but burst out:

'O, Mr. Fortescue, are you really going up to town to see E. P.?'

Before Harry could answer, Lady Carlton had interposed:

'My dear Florry, what does it matter to us if Mr. Fortescue goes to town, and whether he goes to see E. P. or any other set of initials? We have no right'—she said this rather stiffly—'to pry into his secrets.'

'Quite so,' said Lady Sweetapple. 'After all, I daresay E. P. only means Edward Price, or some common name of that sort.'

'O, Lady Sweetapple!' said Alice, who remembered what Amicia must have known well, after Harry's confession—that E. P. could only mean Edith Price.

As for Florry, she looked daggers and bowls of poison, and all Queen Eleanor's black arts, against Lady Sweetapple, but she said nothing.

Amicia only smiled in answer to the exclamation of Alice; for she saw that all things were now playing her game, and if she wished for one thing more than another, it was that Harry might rush away from High Beech and quarrel with Florry before he went. Observe,

too, her art. She had contented herself with merely reading out the advertisement in the most innocent way. She had taken no part in identifying it with Harry; and when Florry broke out in that wild way about E. P., she had come to Harry's rescue by suggesting that after all E. P. was only a man, and so taking the whole sting out of the advertisement. For this Harry felt really grateful; and so, while Alice exclaimed, 'O, Lady Sweetapple!' Harry said:

'Thank you, Lady Sweetapple.'

After these interjections there was a little pause.

Every one seemed to think it necessary to say something, and no one said it. Lady Carlton was the first to recover her tongue, and all she said was,

'The worst of this anonymous advertisement is, that it seems likely to deprive us of the continuance of Mr. Fortescue's company. Is it really so, Mr. Fortescue? Must you return to town at once?'

'I am afraid I must,' said Harry.

'Could you not return to dinner?' asked Lady Carlton.

'That, too, I must decline,' said Harry, who felt very much hurt at Florry's imputation, and had been wondering ever since the advertisement had been read out, how it was that she had been led to fix any meaning on E. P.

'And what will you do, Mr. Vernon?' said Lady Carlton, turning to Edward.

'I shall go with Harry,' said Edward, who, on his side, had not forgiven Alice for her coldness of last night; besides, were not he and Harry inseparables? and was he not in reality as much concerned as Harry in seeing that the cheque was duly paid to Edith Price?

But as he said these words he was afraid to look at Alice, lest he should encounter her reproachful eyes.

'We shall, then, lose both our young men,' said Lady Carlton; 'I am sure I wish there was no second column of the *Times*.'

And so it was settled that Harry and Edward were to leave for London that afternoon. Harry was for going at once; but Edward said he could never be ready before luncheon, and so obtained a short respite.

'I wonder what it's all about,' said Sir Thomas Carlton to Lord Pennyroyal, as they sat after breakfast in the library.

'It's all debt, depend upon it,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'Mr. Fortescue has not paid some man to whom he owes money, and to whom he promised to send a cheque, and now the man has advertised for him. Some racing debt, I daresay. Young men get into debt in so many ways now.'

'I never knew that Harry Fortescue was a betting man,' said Sir Thomas, 'and I don't believe it.'

'I was sorry to hit you so hard, Harry,' said Mr. Beeswing, as

he passed Harry Fortescue in the hall; 'but I really did not think the advertisement could refer to you.'

'O, pray don't say a word about it,' said Harry; 'it's of no sort of consequence;' and so he passed up the slippery black staircase to his own room, where he found Edward.

As soon as the two friends were alone together, Edward broke out:

'I can't understand this at all, Harry. Here you write a letter and send a cheque from this house to Edith, and it never reaches her. That's plain. It is also clear the poor girl, after waiting all these days, has put that advertisement into the paper. Of course it was all chance that Lady Sweetapple read it out in that silly way; but she was evidently not in the secret. That's also plain. But how did Florry Carlton burst out in that way about E. P.? It seems as if she knew all about Edith Price.'

'I don't see that it is any business of ours to clear up the mystery which others have made,' said Harry. 'A man who sits on mares' nests made by silly people will only hatch harm to himself. What we have to do is to pack up our things and be off—at least that is what I have to do. As for you, old fellow, you will feel the parting from Alice far more than I shall. Why don't you stay behind and "mak' it sicker," as the Scotchman said?'

'No,' said Edward; 'I'm not going to let you leave High Beech as it were under a cloud. I can see, in spite of all Lady Carlton said, that all the women think that E. P. is a woman. At such a moment I am not going to separate myself from my bosom friend, Harry; and so, old fellow, when you go, I go.'

'But what about Alice Carlton?' said Harry. 'I fancied you had got so far yesterday that you could not help going a little farther to-day.'

'So I thought, in the dell, yesterday,' said Edward, 'and so perhaps I may think again; but she was so cold and constrained, and altogether so unlovable last night, that I do not know what to think or what to say, except that I am very fond of her.'

'Poor fellow!' said Harry, who all the time was cramming his 'things,' as he called them, into his portmanteau.

After Edward had inspected that operation for a little while, he said:

'I may just as well go and pack my portmanteau too, and then perhaps I may have an opportunity of an explanation with Alice.'

While Harry and Edward were thus engaged upstairs, the four elder ladies were discussing the advertisement in Lady Carlton's boudoir, and Florry and Alice and Amicia were doing the same in the conservatory.

'After all, though,' said Lady Carlton, 'that was a strange advertisement, and I must own my mind is not quite easy about it.'

'The only remarkable thing about it,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'seems to me to be the fact that it really referred to Mr. Fortescue. I never remember being in any company before where the same thing happened. It may be for good, and it may be for harm; but at any rate it must be remembered to Mr. Fortescue for good, that he at once, in the frankest way, confessed that the advertisement referred to him. In that case it can hardly be very bad.'

'I am not so sure,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'Perhaps he thought it no use denying it, and that the only way was to brazen it out. Then too, if there were no harm in his conduct, why did he refuse any explanation? It would have been so easy to clear it all up.'

'Perhaps he is too proud,' said Lady Pennyroyal, whose kindness of heart always led her to excuse people if she could.

'Pride in such matters,' said Mrs. Marjoram with great unction, 'is a very false feeling. If people are too proud to confess their faults, or explain them away, they cannot complain if they are looked on as really guilty.'

'But,' said Lady Pennyroyal, returning to the charge against Satan's advocate, 'how do we know there is any harm in the advertisement? Here it is; let us read it over again. "Lupus-street." What harm is there in Lupus-street?'

'O,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'how can I tell? I never was in Lupus-street in my life.'

'Nor was I,' said Lady Pennyroyal; 'and yet, to hear you speak, it would seem as if all the wolves in sheep's clothing in the world lived in it.'

'I daresay they do,' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'All I know is, I never heard of any decent people living in it. I daresay it belongs to some low-lived person.'

'There you are quite wrong,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'for it is built on the Marjoram property; and I know so much about it that Lord Pennyroyal is the ground landlord of all the houses in Lupus-street.'

'Indeed!' said Mrs. Marjoram, quite shocked; for, as you well know, the Pennyroyal title was almost the only thing that severely moral and righteous Xanthippe respected in this wicked world.

'So far then, so good,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'We have proved no harm against Lupus-street, we only know nothing about it. I do not know how you look on things, dear Mrs. Marjoram, but where there is doubt I always lean to the charitable side; and still more so in this case, where we know absolutely nothing, one way or the other.'

'I am afraid,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'I am not so charitable, for my part; where men are concerned, I suspect everything.'

'A very pleasant, and, I must add, a very Christian feeling,' said Lady Pennyroyal; 'but let us proceed. Lupus-street; I say

there is no harm in that. What comes next? Mr. H. F. e. Well, that, Mr. Fortescue has confessed, means H. Fortescue. There is no harm in that; Fortescue is an old and honourable name.'

'Handsome is that handsome does,' edged in Mrs. Marjoram, rather to the indignation of dear Mrs. Barker, who held up her hands in amazement.

'"Mr. H. Fortescue is requested to communicate at once with E. P.,"' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'Well, what harm is there in that?'

'All the harm in the world!' cried out Mrs. Marjoram, in almost a shriek of virtuous wrath. 'All the harm in the world! Depend upon it, E. P. is some wicked woman who has entrapped Mr. Fortescue.'

'Why, dear Mrs. Marjoram,' said Lady Pennyroyal, 'you said just now you suspected all men; but now it appears you are just as suspicious of your own sex.'

'I suspect them all,' said Mrs. Marjoram, very much as though she were repeating the passage in the baptismal service: 'I renounce them all.' To listen to her, one felt that no woman would obtain mercy at her hands. 'If there were no wicked designing women, there would be no bad men. Men are such geese!'

'Mrs. Marjoram!' said Mrs. Barker with great dignity, 'Colonel Barker is not a goose.'

'The present company are always excepted,' said Mrs. Marjoram; and then she waited to hear what more Lady Pennyroyal had to say.

'But how do you know that E. P. is a woman; and if she is a woman, that she is bad? There is no proof here of either.'

'I think E. P. is a woman,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'because her advertisement is worded in such an artful way, and because she's in such a hurry. "Lupus-street!" there's art to attract his eye when he is sitting at breakfast, only Lady Sweetapple's eyes, being those of a woman, were sharper, and found it out first. Then see what a hurry she is in—"at once:" she can't wait a moment, you see.'

'I must say I can see no harm in the whole advertisement,' said Lady Pennyroyal.

'What, not in the barefaced begging for money, which comes at the end?' said Mrs. Marjoram. 'Depend upon it, poor Mr. Fortescue'—Mrs. Marjoram said 'poor Mr. Fortescue' as though she were the only champion of the male sex in the world—'is drained of every penny of his income by this deceitful young creature.'

'It seems to me your imagination makes a great deal out of very little,' said Lady Pennyroyal. 'I say it again, I can see no harm in the whole advertisement.'

'None so blind as those that won't see,' said Mrs. Marjoram.

And so the conversation of the elders came to an end, Lady Carl-

ton, who had listened most attentively, repeating the sentence with which she had begun it: 'After all, my mind is not quite easy about it.'

While Mrs. Marjoram, like the unconverted Saul, was pouring out her uncharitableness against the whole human race, and haling both men and women to her own judgment-seat, the three younger ladies were sitting under a *Datura* in the conservatory, which nearly concealed them with its great green leaves. Over their heads climbed and crept passion-flowers and *Stephanotis*, and altogether it was a cool and pleasant place in that hot June weather.

'You see, my dears,' said Amicia, 'I was quite right about Miss Edith Price. Everything bears out the truth of what I said. I had hardly taken you into my confidence about her when one of you finds Mr. Vernon writing a letter to her, and next morning you have only to take up a newspaper to find an advertisement from that young person, proving that Mr. Fortescue is in the habit of sending her cheques.'

'It is too true,' said Alice, already almost in tears.

'I can't deny it,' said Florry, 'more especially since Mr. Fortescue has confessed it himself; but what I want to know, Lady Sweetapple, is why you said E. P. meant Edward Price, when you very well knew those initials meant Edith Price?'

'My dear Miss Carlton,' said Amicia in her very sweetest voice, 'I looked on myself as one in the position of a confidante of Mr. Fortescue; I had obtained his secret, and I thought it only generous to come to the rescue when I saw you all turning against him, and so I told what I consider to be a very white lie, and suggested, for it was only a suggestion, that E. P. might, after all, only mean "Edward Price."'

'All very generous, I daresay,' said Florry; 'but you know you cannot throw dust in our eyes. We are behind the scenes; we know as well as you that E. P. can only mean Edith Price.'

'I only meant that I was generous to Mr. Fortescue,' said Amicia drily; 'I had no idea to be generous to you. I only wished to warn you against that young person for your own sakes. And I must say it is some little satisfaction to me to see my warning confirmed.'

'There is one thing I would so like to ask,' said Alice.

'What is it?' said Amicia, with an air as though there was nothing in the world she could refuse to the lovely young girl.

'How you came to know about this Edith Price?'

'Yes,' said Florry, 'and I too; I should very much like to know that.'

'I am so sorry,' said Amicia; 'it quite goes to my heart to be forced to refuse you so very reasonable a request, but it cannot be. I am bound to secrecy in this matter. You must be content with

owing, as, indeed, you must both now feel, that what I say is true. The source of my information I cannot reveal.'

'Did you know about her before you came here?' said Florry, yet illogically pursuing the inquiry after Lady Sweetapple had declined to continue it.

'I really cannot say,' said Amicia. 'You must be satisfied with the knowledge that Edith Price exists and is a dangerous son.'

'Dangerous to me or to Florry?' said Alice, wishing to save her own Vernon's character if she could.

'Really,' said Amicia, 'you must judge for yourself as to that. You see, Mr. Vernon writes letters to her, and Mr. Fortescue sends her cheques. Which is worst or most dangerous, I cannot say.'

'They can't both be in love with her at once,' said Florry.

'I am sure I can't say,' said Amicia, rather in a mocking tone. 'Such things have happened before now. But one thing, I think, is quite clear—this: that if two young men are in love with the same woman, she must be very dangerous, and, I am sorry to add, they must both be worthless, and quite beneath the consideration of any young lady who has the least self-respect.'

'I don't believe they are either of them in love with her,' said Florry.

As for Alice, she melted away into tears. The voice of Lady Arlton was now heard, calling for her daughters, and all that Amicia could add was:

'Remember that I shall still hold you to secrecy. You must on no account reveal what I have told you to any human being.'



THE HAWTHORN-TREE

I.

My Love, 'neath the hawthorn-tree we will sit—
The hawthorn-tree with its bonny flowers,
That fall as we pass ; in snowy showers
They fall ; they fall till the grass looks white.
Alas, they will all be dead ere night !
 Heigho, heigho !
 That it should be so !

II.

My Love, do you see the bonny blackbird,
And hear the song he is singing to me ?
A blackbird's song in a hawthorn-tree,
O Love, will last but a summer's day,
Then spread its wings and fly away.
 Heigho, heigho !
 That it should be so !

III.

My Love, we will part 'neath the hawthorn-tree :
Good-bye, good-bye ! I would rather part
While you love me still, O fickle heart !
Some hearts will change, some love will die ;
And so, false Love, good-bye ! good-bye !
 Heigho, heigho !
 That it should be so !

BELGRAVIA

JUNE 1872

TO THE BITTER END

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII. MR. WALGRAVE IS TRANSLATED.

ALL through the long dead hours of the night, and after the cheerless winter morning had crept in through the close-venetians, Hubert Walgrave sat alone in the dainty little sitting-room, littered with the things he had bought for Grace Mayne, gay with hothouse flowers that languished in the close sphere, fairy roses and waxen camellias which her hands were wont to tend.

He lay upstairs, in the pretty white-draped bedchamber that had been her own—lay with her hands folded on her breast, more lovely than he could have supposed it possible for death to be. No servant-maids, and a weird old woman who came he knew not whence, had summoned him to see her, when their dismal office had been done; and he had stood alone by the white bed, looking down at her, tearless—with a countenance that seemed more rigid than her own.

He stayed there for a long time—knelt down and tried to fashion his thoughts or words into any given form. There was a confusion in his mind which in all his life had never before oppressed him. Once he bent over the cold hands, and covered them with gentle kisses.

'My angel, my dove, come back to me!' he cried; 'I will not believe that you are dead.'

But that awful coldness, that utter stillness, gave him an agony more than he could endure. He turned away, and went down to the room below, where he sat alone till morning, with only a change of posture, thinking of what he had done.

To say that if he could have brought her back to life he would have married her, would have flung every hope of worldly advancement, every consideration for the prejudices of mankind to the winds, is to say very little. Looking back now at his conduct, in the light of this calamity, he wondered how he could ever have counted the cost of any sacrifice that he might be called on to make for Grace Redmayne.

'I loved her with all my heart and soul,' he said to himself, 'as I never loved before, as I never can hope to love again. What more had I to consider? The loss of a fortune—a wife's fortune? What! am I such a sordid wretch as to hold that worth the cost of a wrong done to her? But, O God, how could I think that I should kill her? I meant to be so true and loyal to her. I meant to make her life so bright.'

He looked round at the scattered silken stuffs, lying in a heap on the floor as he had kicked them aside when Grace fell—the flowers and glove-boxes, and fans and scent-bottles; looked at them with a bitter laugh.

'I have been taught that women only care for these things,' he said to himself; 'and yet a few heartless words of mine killed her.'

He thought of all his plans, which had seemed to him so reasonable, so generous even, in regard to Grace: this dainty suburban home, an orderly little establishment—no stint of anything that makes life pleasant—a carriage perhaps, for his darling. His professional income was increasing daily, he saw himself on the high road to distinction, and could afford to regulate his life upon a liberal scale.

And for his marriage with Augusta Vallory? That was not to be given up—only deferred for an indefinite period; and when it did take place, it would be like some royal marriages on record, a ceremonial political alliance, which would leave his heart free for Grace.

But she was gone, and he felt himself something worse than a murderer.

There was an inquest next day, an unspeakable horror to Hubert Walgrave; but he had grown strangely calm by this time, and regulated his conduct with extreme prudence.

He had taken the house and engaged the servants under the name of Walsh. Before the coroner he stated that the young lady who had died yesterday was his sister Grace Walsh. The housemaid had heard him call her Grace while they were both trying to restore her, so any concealment of the Christian name would have been impossible. He had been down into the country to fetch her from a boarding-school, whence she was coming to keep house for him. She was his only sister, aged nineteen.

The case was a very simple one. There had been a post-

mortem examination, and the cause of death was sufficiently obvious.

'There was organic disease,' the doctor said, and then went on to give his technical explanation of the case. 'It was the excitement of coming home to her brother, no doubt, that precipitated matters. But she could hardly have lived many years—a sudden shock might at any time have killed her.'

'There could have been no sudden shock in this case though,' remarked the coroner; 'there could be nothing of a sudden or startling character in a prearranged meeting between brother and sister!'

'Probably not,' replied the medical man; 'but extreme excitement, a feverish expectation of some event long hoped for, emancipation from school-life, and so on, might have the same fatal effect. The nature was evidently extremely sensitive. There are physiological signs of that.'

'Was your sister much excited yesterday, Mr. Walsh?' asked the coroner.

'Yes; she was considerably excited—she had a peculiarly sensitive nature.'

The housemaid was examined, and confirmed her master's story. They had both supposed the young lady had only fainted. Mr. Walsh said she was subject to fainting-fits.

The coroner was quite satisfied; everything was done with extreme consideration for the feelings of Mr. Walsh, who was evidently a gentleman. Verdict: 'Heart-disease, or fatal syncope.'

In less than a week from the day of her flight, Grace Redmayne was laid quietly to rest in the churchyard of Hetheridge, Herts—a village as picturesque and sequestered as any rural nook in the green heart of the midland shires.

Mr. Walgrave had a horror of cemeteries, and the manner in which the solemn business of interment is performed in those metropolises of the dead. He chose the most rustic spot that he could find within a reasonable distance of Highgate, the spot that seemed to him most in consonance with the character of his beloved dead.

And so ended his love-story. Afar off there hung a dark impending cloud—trouble which might arise for him in the future out of this tragedy. But he told himself that, if fortune favoured him, he might escape all that. The one great fact was his loss, and that seemed to him very heavy.

The business of life had to go on nevertheless, the great Cardinum case came on, and Hubert Walgrave reaped the reward of a good deal of solid labour, spoke magnificently, and made a considerable advance in his professional career by the time the trial was over. In the beginning of December the Acropolis-square house emerged

from its state of hibernation, and began to give dinners—dinners to which Mr. Walgrave was in duty bound to go.

When he called upon Miss Vallory after one of these banquets, she expressed surprise at seeing a band on his hat.

'I did not know you were in mourning,' she said. 'You did not tell me that you had lost any one.'

'It was hardly worth while to trouble you about it since the person was a stranger to you, and not a near relation of mine.'

'Not a near relation! but your hatband is as deep as a widower's—as deep as that of a widower who means to marry again almost immediately, for they always wear the deepest.'

'Is it?' asked Mr. Walgrave, with a faint smile; 'I told the hatter to put on a band. I gave no directions as to width.'

'But tell me all about your relation, Hubert. You must know that I am interested in everything that concerns you. Was it an uncle, or an aunt?'

'Neither; only a distant cousin.'

'But really now, Hubert, that hatband is absurd for a distant cousin. You positively must have it altered.'

'I will take it off altogether, if you like, my dear. After all, these "customary suits of solemn black" are only "the trappings and the suits of woe." But I have a feeling that there is a kind of disrespect in not wearing mourning for a person you have esteemed.'

'Pray don't suppose that I disapprove of mourning. I consider any neglect of those things the worst possible taste. But a distant cousin, hardly a relation at all—the mourning should be appropriate. Did your cousin die in London?'

'No; in the country.' He saw that Miss Vallory was going to ask him where, and anticipated her. 'In Shropshire.'

He said this at a venture, having a vague idea that no one knew Shropshire.

'Indeed!' exclaimed Augusta; 'we have been asked to visit friends near Bridgenorth; but I have never been in Shropshire. Did your cousin leave you any money? Perhaps that is the reason of your deep hatband.'

'My cousin left me nothing—but—but a closer acquaintance with death. Every loss in a family brings us that, you know.'

'Of course,—it is always very sad.'

The Cardium case being a marked and positive triumph for Hubert Walgrave, he assumed his silk gown early in the ensuing spring, very much to the gratification of his betrothed, who was really proud of him, and anxious for his advancement. Was he not indeed a part of herself? No position that her own money could obtain for her would satisfy her without the aid of some distinction achieved by him. She knew to the uttermost what money could and could not purchase.

There was a family dinner in Acropolis-square very soon after Mr. Walgrave's advancement, a dinner so strictly private that even Weston had not been invited.

'The fact is, I want half an hour's quiet chat with you, Walgrave,' Mr. Vallory said, when Augusta had left the two gentlemen alone after dinner; 'so I took especial care there should be no one here to-day but ourselves. I don't like to ask you to come and see me at the office; that seems so confoundedly formal.'

'At any place, and at any time, I should be happy to hold myself at your disposal,' Mr. Walgrave replied politely.

'Thanks; I know you are very good, and all that kind of thing; but I wanted a friendly talk, you see; and I never can get half an hour in the Old Jewry free from junior partners or senior clerks bobbing in and out, wanting my signature to this, that, and the other, or to know whether I will see Mr. Smith, or won't see Mr. Jones. The truth of the matter is, my dear Walgrave, that I am very much pleased with you. I may say more than pleased—surprised. Not that I ever for a moment doubted your talents; no, believe me,—this with a ponderous patronage, as if he feared that the younger man might perish untimely under the fear of not having been appreciated by him—'no, no, my dear fellow, I was quite aware there was stuff in you, but did not know how soon—ah, ha!—you might turn your stuff into silk. I did not expect your talents to bear fruit so rapidly.'

'You are very kind,' said Hubert Walgrave, looking steadily down at his plate. He had an apprehension of what was coming, and nerved himself to meet it. It was his fate; the destiny he had once courted eagerly, set all his wits to compass. Why should he shrink from it now? What was there to come between him and Augusta Vallory? Nothing—but a ghost!

'Now I am not a believer in long engagements,' continued Mr. Vallory: 'I am a man of the world, and I look at things from a worldly point of view, and I can't say that I have ever seen any good come of them. Sometimes the man sees some one he likes better than the girl he's engaged to, sometimes the girl sees some one she likes better; neither is candid enough to make a clean breast of it; and they go dawdling on, pretending to be devoted to each other, and ultimately marry without a ha'porth of love between them.'

'There is sound philosophy in what you say, no doubt; but I should imagine where the affection is sincere, and not weakened by comparison, time should strengthen the bond.'

'Yes, when a man and woman are married, and know that the bondage is a permanent business. Now when you first proposed to my daughter, with a full knowledge of her position as a young woman who might fairly expect to make a much better match, I told you that I could not consent to your marriage until you had achieved

some standing in your profession—income was a secondary consideration with me. Augusta has enough for both.'

'I hope I made you understand clearly that I could never submit to a position of dependence on my wife?' Mr. Walgrave said hastily.

'Quite so; but you can't help absorbing the advantages of your wife's money. Your wife can't eat turtle-soup at her end of the table, while you eat mutton-broth at your end. Augusta is not a girl who will cut her coat according to your cloth. She will expect the surroundings she has been accustomed to from her cradle; and she will expect you to share them, without question as to whose banking account contributes the most to the expenses of the household. What she has a right to expect from her husband is personal distinction; and as I believe you are on the high road to achieve that, I give my full permission to as early a marriage as may be agreeable to you both.'

Mr. Walgrave bowed, in acknowledgment of this concession, without any outward semblance of rapture; but as they were both Englishmen, Mr. Vallory expected no such demonstration.

'You are very generous, my dear sir,' said the younger man quietly; 'I am Augusta's slave in this matter; her will is mine.'

'So be it. I leave you to settle the business between you. But there is one point that I may as well explain at once—my late partner Harcross's will is rather a remarkable one, and provides for the event of Augusta's marriage. He was a peculiar man in many ways, my old friend Harcross, and had a monstrous reverence for his own name; not that he ever pretended that any Harcrosses came over with the Conqueror, or when the Conqueror came were all at home, or anything of that kind. His grandfather was a self-made man, and the Harcrosses were a sturdy, self-reliant race, with an extraordinary opinion of their own merits.'

Mr. Walgrave raised his eyebrows a little, wondering whither all this rambling talk was drifting.

'And to come to the point at once,' continued Mr. Vallory, 'my good friend left it as a condition of his bequest, that whoever Augusta married, her husband should assume the name of Harcross. Now the question is, shall you have any objection to that change of name?'

Hubert Walgrave shrugged his shoulders, and raised his eyebrows just a shade higher.

'Upon my word I don't see why I should object,' he said. 'The proposition seems a little startling at first, as if one were asked to dye one's hair, or something of that kind. But I suppose any shred of reputation I may have made as Walgrave will stick to me as Harcross.'

'Decidedly, my dear boy; we will take care of that,' Mr. Val-

ry answered. 'There is no name better known and respected in the legal profession than the name of Harcross. As Hubert Walgrave you may be a very clever fellow; but as Hubert Harcross you will be associated with one of the oldest firms in the *Law List*. You will be no loser professionally by the change, I can assure you.'

'Then I am ready to take out letters patent whenever you and Augusta desire me to do so. "Hubert Walgrave Harcross," not a bad signature to put at the foot of a letter to the free and independent electors of Eatanswill, when I go in for a seat in Parliament by and by. Hubert Harcross—so be it! What's in a name, and in my name of all others, that I should cherish it?'

CHAPTER XIX.

RICHARD REDMAYNE'S RETURN.

A GREAT ship far out at sea, an English ship homeward bound, from Brisbane to the port of Liverpool, and among the passengers on board her one Richard Redmayne, agriculturist, gold-digger, and general speculator, sailing back to the home of his forefathers.

He is returning to England sooner than he had hoped to return at least a year. Things have gone well with him during the last eighteen months; almost as well as he had fancied they might go in his daydreams under the old cedar at Brierwood, in those summer-noon reveries in which he had watched his daughter's face thwart the smoke of his pipe, and thought what a grand thing it would be to go out to Australia and make a fortune for her.

He has done it. For a long time the Fates seemed against him; it was dreary work living the hard rough life, toiling from misty morning to mistier evening, facing all weathers, holding his own against all competitors, and with no result. Many a time he had wished himself back in England—ay, even with Brierwood sold to strangers, and only a field and a cottage left him—but a field and a cottage in England, with English flowers peeping in at his casement, English fare, English climate, and his daughter's sweet face to make the brightness of his life. What did it all matter? he asked himself sometimes. Did a big house and many acres constitute happiness? And his broad fields or goodly rick-yards consoled him in the early days of his widowhood, when the loss of his fair young wife made the universe seem dark to him? A thousand times, no. Then welcome poverty in Kent, among the orchards and hop-gardens, with the daughter of his love.

He had been sick to the heart when the tide turned. His first successes were not large; but they cheered him beyond measure, and enabled him to write hopefully home. Then he fell into companionship with a clever adventurer, a man who had a smattering of

science, and a good deal of rough genius, in his peculiar way; a man who was great upon the chemistry of soils, but lacked a strong arm, and Herculean muscles, like Rick Redmayne's; whereby there arose a partnership between the two, in which the farmer was to profit by the knowledge of Mr. Nicholas Spettigue, the amateur chemist, while Mr. Spettigue on his part was to reap a fair share of the fruits of Rick Redmayne's labour. The business needed four men to work it well; so they took a brace of sturdy Milesians into their company, whose labours were to be recompensed by an equitable share in the gains; and with these coadjutors began business in real earnest.

Nicholas Spettigue had got scent of a virgin gulley, beyond Wood's Point, a little way off the beaten track, and reputed worth working. The four men went in quest of this El Dorado alone, and camped out together for a spell of many months, toiling manfully, remote from the general herd of diggers; standing knee-deep in running water for hours on end, rocking the cradle with a patience that surpassed the patience of maternity; living on one unvarying fare of grilled mutton and damper, with unlimited supplies of strong black tea, boiled in a 'billy,' and unmollified by the produce of the cow.

They slept in a cavern under one of the sterile hills that sheltered their Pactolus, and slept none the less sweetly for the roughness of their quarters. Not very long did they hold the secret of their discovery: other explorers tracked them to their land of promise, and set up their claims in the neighbourhood; but Mr. Spettigue had spotted the best bit in the district, and Fortune favoured him and his Kentish partner. They were not quite so lucky as a certain Dr. Kerr, who, in the early days of the gold discoveries at Bathurst, found a hundredweight of gold one fine morning on his sheep-walk, lying under his very nose as it were, where it had lain throughout his proprietorship of the land, and might have so lain for ever, had not an aboriginal shepherd's eye been caught by the glitter of a yellow streak amidst the quartz. They did not fall upon monster nuggets, but by patience and toil realised a profit varying from ten pounds a week per man to forty.

When they had exhausted, or supposed they had exhausted, their field of operations, they divided the spoil. Richard Redmayne's share came to something more than three thousand pounds. All that owed in England could be paid with half the amount. He had seen a good deal of the country since he had been out—had seen something of its agricultural capabilities, and wanted to see more; so now that the chief business of his exile was accomplished, he gave himself a brief holiday in which to explore the wild sheep-walks of this new world. He was not a man who loved money for its own sake, and having now more than enough to pay his debts, and set him going again in the dear old Kentish homestead, he had no desire

toil any longer; much to the surprise and vexation of Nicholas Spettigue, who had his eye upon a new district, and was eager to test its capabilities.

'I shall have to look out for a new pal,' he said. 'But I doubt if I shall ever find an honest man with such a biceps as yours, Rick. If you'd only keep on with me, I'd make you a millionaire before we shut up shop. But I suppose you're homesick, and there's no use in saying any more.'

'I've got a daughter, you see,' Richard Redmayne said, looking down with a thoughtful smile, 'and I want to get back to her.'

'As if I didn't know all about your daughter,' exclaimed Mr. Spettigue, who had heard of Grace Redmayne very often from the old father's lips. 'Why don't you write to her to come out to the colony? You might settle her somewhere comfortably in Brisbane, and go on with your work up here, till you were as rich as one of the Rothschilds.'

Richard Redmayne shook his head by way of answer to this proposition. 'A colonial life wouldn't suit Gracey,' he said; 'she's too tender a flower for that sort of thing.'

'I daresay she's an uncommonly pretty girl,' Mr. Spettigue remarked in his careless way, 'if she's anything like you, mate.'

'Like me!' cried the farmer; 'she's as much like me as a lily's to me—she's as much like me as a snowdrop is like a sunflower. You can fancy a water-lily that's been changed into a woman, you can fancy my daughter Grace.'

'I can't,' answered the practical Mr. Spettigue. 'I never was good at fancying, and if I could, your water-lily-faced woman is not my style. I like a girl with cheeks as red as peonies, and plenty of flesh on her bones, with no offence meant to you, Rick.'

So the partnership was dissolved, and Richard Redmayne bought himself a horse, and set off upon an exploring expedition among the sheep-farms.

In the course of these wanderings, in which he met with much hospitality and kindness in solitary homesteads, where his bright and cheery voice won a joyous welcome, Mr. Redmayne came on a lowland farm in Gippsland, whose owners had fallen on evil days; the rough loghouse was empty, the land neglected, and a family of vagabond wanderers who had taken up their abode in one of the barns told him that the estate was to be sold by auction at Brisbane, in something less than a fortnight.

He went over the land, and his practised eye was quick to perceive its value. It had been badly worked, and the man who owned it had gone at a rapid pace to the dogs; but the occupants of the barn told Mr. Redmayne that this late proprietor had drunk himself to delirium tremens three or four times a year, and had squandered every sixpence he earned playing 'poker' and other equally

intellectual games with any wandering stranger whom Providence sent in his way. The farm had fallen into bad odour by reason of his nonsuccess, and had been put up to auction already, and withdrawn from sale, the biddings not reaching the reserved price which the late owner's trade assignees had put upon it.

'You might get it by private contrack, I dessay,' said the man, when he perceived Mr. Redmayne's inclination to buy, 'if you was to look sharp about it, and make yer hoffer to the hauctioneer between this and nex' Toosday week.'

Richard Redmayne was fascinated by the place, which was called Bulrush Meads, there being a considerable tract of low-lying meadow land, with a broad stream meandering through it, richly fringed with tall bulrushes—superb land for stock. There was hill as well as dale, and the site of the rough log dwelling-house was as picturesque as anything he had seen in his holiday ramble. What a king he might be here with Grace, he thought to himself. The life would not be rough for her, safe sheltered under his wing, and with honest Kentish lasses for her servants. His quick eye told him how the place might be improved: a roomy parlour built out on one side, with a wide verandah supported by rustic pillars, a pleasant shelter beneath which his darling might sit and work on sunny afternoons. And what a prospect for those gentle eyes to gaze upon! what a varied sweep of hill and valley, bright silver streamlet flashing athwart greenest of meadows, a thousand sheep looking no bigger than so many daisies upon the distant uplands, a blue lake that was vast as an inland sea in the foreground, and far away on the left of the landscape a forest of almost tropical richness! A couple of bedrooms could be added above, wooden like the rest of the house, which was strongly though roughly built. Vines and pumpkins climbed to the shingle roof, and all kinds of flowers, brighter and larger than the blossoms of his native land, overran the neglected garden.

On one side of the low rambling edifice there was an orchard of peach-trees; on the other a grove of cabbage-palms, eighty feet high, their tall trunks entwined by a luxuriant flowering parasite; a giant fig-tree spread its broad leaves near at hand, side by side with a huge stinging-nettle tree, all a-glitter with silvery spiculæ, like a vegetable needle manufactory.

The fancy once having seized upon him was not to be put away. He was very fond of Brierwood—fond with a traditional love which was an instinct of his mind; but he had always been more or less cramped in that narrow orbit. This rough-and-ready life, with such wide space for roaming and adventure, suited him a great deal better than the dot-and-go-one round of a farmer's existence at home. And then the novelty of the thing had a powerful witchery. To take this neglected estate in hand, and make it a model of high

ing, was a task worth an enterprising man's labour. At Brierwood everything was so narrow, his best experiments had failed for want of room. Here, in this wide field, he saw his way to certain fortune.

Fevered by visions of a veritable Arcadia, of which his beloved race should be queen; fired too by the squatter, who hung about him as he explored the place, and was eager to curry favour with a probable purchaser, cherishing his own peculiar vision of a comfortable berth under the new rule,—Mr. Redmayne ultimately resolved to make a bid for Bulrush Meads, and mounted his horse to ride to Brisbane. He did between thirty and forty miles a day, sometimes riding from daybreak till sunset along a narrow channel cut through a bush so dense that it would have been impossible to swerve to the right or the left, sometimes crossing grassy hills two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and at nightfall hobbling his horse to the dewy sward. Wherever he met with human habitations, he met with kindness and hospitality; and so prospering as he went, he reached the city in time to attend the sale. He made no attempt at negotiation, thinking it wiser to await the hazard of the auction. Circumstances favoured him; the biddings were feeble and spiritless; and Mr. Redmayne bought Bulrush Meads for eight hundred and fifty pounds—just one hundred above the reserved price. The auctioneer congratulated him upon having got the estate for an old song, and drank a bottle of champagne at the lucky purchaser's expense.

'And, upon my word, it ought to be a three-dozen case,' he said, 'considering your luck, Mr. Redmayne.'

All legal rites being duly performed, Richard Redmayne went back to take possession of his estate, thoroughly delighted with his investment. He left his vagabond friend as a kind of caretaker, giving him a ten-pound note as an advance payment for work to be done in the way of repairing fences and improving boundaries.

'If I find you know anything about farming, I shall take you on as a regular hand when I come back,' he said; 'and I shall come back as soon as ever I can settle my affairs in England.'

He meant to let Brierwood, or to leave his brother James in possession, if things had gone as prosperously as James asserted they had gone in his absence, and thus work the two estates. For himself it seemed to him that no state of existence could be so delicious as a wild free life at Bulrush Meads, with a prosperous farmyard and a goodly array of corn ricks, a comfortable hearth by which the wandering stranger might rest, a hospitable table at which there should always be room enough for the traveller, and half-a-dozen good saddle-horses in his stable. He would teach Grace to ride, and she could canter about the farm with him, ride beside him many

a mile on moonlight nights across that splendid country, over grassy hill-tops two thousand feet above the southern sea.

The fact that the life might be somewhat lonely for his daughter flashed across his mind occasionally; but he dismissed the notion carelessly enough. What mode of existence could be duller than her life at Brierwood? In Kent she was only a small farmer's daughter. Here in these backwoods she would be a queen; and he had confidence enough in her affection to believe that any life would be acceptable to her that was to be shared with him.

Of the day when she might desire to form new ties he thought but vaguely. No doubt that time would come: some handsome young emigrant would woo and win her; but even that event need not result in separation between father and daughter. There was room enough at Bulrush Meads for a patriarchal household; and Richard Redmayne could fancy himself sitting under his vine-clad verandah, cool and spacious as a Sevillian *patio*, with a noisy crowd of grandchildren clambering on his knees.

'I will never part with her,' he said to himself fondly.

He sailed from Brisbane early in March, and arrived at Liverpool towards the end of May. He had received no letters from home for some months before his departure; but this was the result of his own nomadic habits rather than of any neglect on the part of his correspondents. The last bore the date of October, and told him that all was well. He was not a man to be tormented by morbid apprehension of possible evil. He made his homeward journey in high spirits, full of hopes and schemes for the future. He had a rude map of Bulrush Meads, which he used to spread out before him on the cuddy-table and ponder upon for an hour at a stretch, with a pencil in his hand, marking out so many acres for wheat here, so many for barley there, inferior tracts for mangel-wurzel, patches of turnips, odd bits of outlying land that would grow beans, wide level pastures for his cattle; dotting down hedges and boundaries, putting in every five-barred gate which was to impart to that fertile wilderness the trim aspect of an English farm.

And so it came to the end of May, bright joyous weather, the first flush and bloom of summer, and Richard Redmayne, with a heart as light as a feather, trod firmly on the soil of his native land.

He lost no time. Up to London as fast as an express train could carry him, from one railway-station to another in a rapid haussom, at London-bridge terminus just in time to catch the train for Tunbridge, from Tunbridge homewards in a fly. He could scarcely sit quietly in the vehicle, as the familiar hedgerows went by him, so eager was he to arrive at the end of his journey. 'I could walk faster than this,' he said to himself; and this impatience so grew upon him at last, that he called to the driver to stop, got out hurriedly, and paid and dismissed him a mile of Brierwood.

He felt freer when he stood alone amidst the still evening landscape. It was sunset—a sunset in early summer after a cloudless day. The western sky was like a sea of gold, and over all the heaven there was a pale tinge of rose colour. There were woods near at hand, and even in his feverish haste Richard Redmayne stopped for a minute or so to listen to the song of a nightingale—a new sound to him after those musicless forests yonder, with only the sharp ringing note of the bellbird, or the mocking tones of the laughing jackass. There was not a shorn elm in the hedgerow that he did not recognise. How familiar, how sweet the scene was! If he had come across that waste of waters only for this, his voyage would hardly have seemed profitless. The landscape moved him as if it had been a living soul—a human creature he had fondly loved.

But it was not for this he had returned; it was for Grace's sake, and for hers only. On every other account it would have suited him better to remain yonder, and set his new estate going. His home-sickness had been only a yearning to see that one beloved face, to feel the gentle touch of that one dear hand.

A quarter of an hour's rapid walking brought him in front of the old house. There it stood, stout and substantial as when he left it, a goodly homestead, untouched by wind or weather, with the sturdy air of hale old age. The garden was all abloom with flowers; there were flower-pots on the window-sills—bow-pots, his mother had called them—and the upper casements stood open. He looked up at the windows of his daughter's room, half hoping to catch a glimpse of her bright head above the geraniums and mignonette; but he could see nothing. Everything about the house looked orderly and prosperous; he heard the geese screaming and the turkeys gobbling in the farmyard, and that deep lowing of cows which has always something awful in it. All things were very fair in the golden evening light. If there were trouble in store for him, the outward aspect of his home gave him no hint of that trouble.

At the last moment, with his hand upon the bell, he changed his mind. He had given them no notice of his return by letter. He would go round to the back, slip in quietly through the garden, and take them all by surprise.

And Grace? He could fancy her shriek of joy, her wild rush into his outspread arms. The picture was in his mind as he went round by a narrow strip of orchard into the garden behind the house. It had never entered into his thoughts that there could be anything amiss.

All was very still; the day's work was over; it was the one delicious hour of breathing-time before supper—the hour in which even aunt Hannah's tongue was wont to be at rest, while she sat with folded hands and slumbered—an hour in which the fumes of

uncle James's pipe ascended like incense burnt before the shrine of the goddess Hestia.

The parlour window was wide open; he went up to it softly over the close-cut grass, and looked in. Yes, his brother and sister-in-law sat in the very attitudes he had fancied: James Redmayne, smoking with a solemn face, his legs stretched on a chair, and a huge silk handkerchief spread over his knees. He looked older and a shade more careworn, the wanderer thought. Aunt Hannah slept in her stiff-backed wooden armchair by the empty hearth, and on her face too there were signs of care.

'If I hadn't seen the grass as I came along, I should have thought from Jim's face there was a bad look-out for the hay,' Richard Redmayne said to himself.

But where was Grace?

In her own room, perhaps, making some bit of finery for her next Sunday's adornment, or reading a novel in the best parlour, or in the garden. He glanced behind him, but could see no light dress flitting by the distant flower-borders, or between the gray old trunks of the apple-trees.

It chilled him a little. The delay would be but a few moments, doubtless. She was somewhere near at hand, and would fly to him like a mad thing at the sound of his voice; but he had so languished to see her, that the briefest delay was a kind of disappointment.

'Jim,' he said gently, not wishing to awaken aunt Hannah too suddenly from her slumbers.

James Redmayne let his long churchwarden pipe slip through his fingers.

'My God!' he cried, 'is it a ghost?'

'A very substantial one, old fellow—thirteen stone in the saddle. It's your affectionate brother Richard in the flesh, and sharp-set enough to enjoy an honest English supper presently.'

He stepped lightly across the low window-seat into the room.

'Where's Gracey?'

Dusk as it was he saw the white change on his brother's face, the awful look which Hannah Redmayne turned upon him as she opened her eyes and beheld him standing there.

'Where's my daughter?' he cried sharply.

The dead silence that followed turned his heart to stone. Those two scared faces, the white dumb lips of his brother, and the silence were enough.

'Is she dead?' he asked, in a low hoarse voice; 'is she dead? Speak out, can't you, and have done with it!'

Aunt Hannah was the first to find courage to speak.

'She is not dead, Richard—at least we have no cause to think so. She may be well and happy, for anything we know. But, O dear, dear, dear! didn't you get James's letter, telling you every

thing, with a copy of the letter she wrote to me when she went away?’

‘When she went away!’ repeated the father sternly; ‘when she went away! I thought I left her in your care, Hannah Redmayne?’

‘And God knows I took good care of her, Richard. But could I help it, if she had the heart to deceive me—to steal away one dark morning, without leaving a trace of where she was gone? But you must have got the letter, surely?’

‘I got no letter, after the one about the hopping. I was out of the way of letters; and I thought my daughter was safe with you. Do you think I would have left her, woman, if I hadn’t thought that?’

He dropped heavily into a chair, and sat looking at them with an awful face. He who had been all life and eagerness five minutes ago seemed changed into a man of stone.

‘What has become of my child?’ he said, in the same stern accusing tone. ‘Begin at the beginning. She is not dead; but she is gone. When did she go, and how?’

‘On the 11th of last November, secretly, stealing away one morning at seven o’clock, when we were all busy. But her letter will tell you the most. We know so little.’

Mrs. James went to a side-table where there was a huge mahogany desk, which she unlocked, and from which she took Grace’s poor little letter. It had been read and re-read many times. The folds of the paper were almost worn through. Richard Redmayne read it aloud twice over, rapidly the first time, then very slowly.

‘Well!’ he exclaimed, ‘a runaway marriage; there’s not so much harm in that. “I shall write to my father by the next mail to beg his forgiveness.” I missed her letter, poor child, along with my other letters. But why should the marriage be secret? and who the devil did she run away with?’

‘There was only one person ever suspected—a Mr. Walgry. She says in her letter that she was going to marry a gentleman, and he is the only gentleman she knew.’

‘How did she come to know him?’

‘He came here to lodge last summer. Mr. Wort recommended him.’

‘Came here to lodge!’ roared Richard Redmayne. ‘Who gave you leave to turn Brierwood into a lodging-house?’

‘It was to oblige Mr. Wort, and to make a twenty-pound note to help you on, Richard. He was a perfect gentleman.’

‘—you!’ cried the farmer, with a tremendous oath. ‘A perfect gentleman; and he stole my daughter! A perfect gentleman; and he has ruined my daughter!’

Mrs. James pointed to the letter.

'She was going away to be married,' she faltered.

'Going away to be married! As if every one didn't know that old story! Is there anything easier than for a villain to promise that? And my darling, that was little more than a child, and knew no more than a child! Keep out of my way, woman!' cried Rick Redmayne, rising suddenly, with his hands and arms twitching convulsively. 'Keep out of my way, for I feel as if I could murder you!'

Hannah went down on her knees before him. She was not a woman to be easily moved, but she had a heart.

'If I had act or part in this trouble, Rick,' she said piteously, 'may God and you forgive me! He knows I tried to do my duty, and that I loved that poor child truly. As I have a soul to be saved, I did everything for the best. I trusted Grace.'

'Yes, and brought a stranger into her home, and trusted him.'

'I had John Wort's word for his character.'

'And to please John Wort you made Brierwood a lodging-house, and brought about my daughter's ruin.'

'Why should you look at it on the darkest side, Richard?' asked Mrs. James, who for her own part had never since Grace's flight taken any but the darkest view of the subject. But to console this grief-stricken man she was ready to affect a hopefulness she had never felt.

'Has she written to you since she went away?'

'No.'

'If she had been honourably married, and happy, do you think she would have been silent?'

There was no answer to that question.

'Was she so ungrateful, so wanting in affection, that she could turn her back upon her home, leave her own flesh and blood to think her false and heartless, to blush for her perhaps, and never write a line to tell them whether she was dead or alive?'

'She may have written to you, Richard.'

'She may. O, my God, what a fool I was to be so careless about getting my letters! I never thought of trouble. I was coming home to my daughter, coming home to find—this!'

He looked round the room, with utter despair in his eyes, with the look which a man might give who stood among the ashes of his home. What would the burning of Brierwood, the loss of every sixpence whereof he stood possessed, have been to him, compared with the loss of his child?

'And it was for this I worked,' he muttered, passing his arm across his forehead with a half-bewildered air; 'it was for this fortune favoured me!' Then, after a pause, he said suddenly, 'You did something, I suppose; you took some means to find out what had become of her? You didn't sit down to eat and drink and sleep, while she was a wanderer and an outcast?'

'We did everything, Richard,' replied Mrs. James—her husband stood by speechless, staring at his brother with dumb compassion. 'John Wort would tell us nothing about Mr. Walgry; but he was very sorry for what had happened, and he went up to town to see Mr. Walgry, and taxed him with having tempted Grace away; and Mr. Walgry denied it. He knew nothing about her. He had never seen her since he left this house, he declared.'

'Lying would come easy to the man who could tempt that child away. Was there no one else you suspected?'

'No one else.'

And then little by little Hannah Redmayne told the whole story of Hubert Walgrave's residence at Brierwood. He had been attentive to Grace, it is true; but no more attentive than any man might be who happened to find himself in daily association with a very pretty girl. From first to last he had shown himself a gentleman. Mrs. Redmayne was emphatic upon that point. Then came the reluctant admission that Grace had drooped after his departure; and no one had thought of putting the two facts together. And then the story of the locket.

Richard Redmayne sat like a statue, with a dark frown upon his face, but no farther expression of his anger, while aunt Hannah rambled on helplessly. His heart was on fire with resentment against these kindred of his who had suffered his darling to be lost. In his mind it was a certain thing that they could have saved her, that she had perished by reason of their carelessness. But he said very little. Such a grief as his is apt to be dumb; and as yet there was a kind of numbness about his feelings that dulled the sense of grief. The news had stunned him.

When aunt Hannah had said all she could say, with no interruption save a few words mumbled now and then feebly by uncle James, Richard Redmayne rose abruptly and put on his hat.

'You're not going out to-night, Richard?' exclaimed his sister-in-law, glancing at the clock. It was half-past nine—a late hour according to Brierwood habits.

'I am going to John Wort. I am going to call him to account for this business.'

'Don't be hard upon him, Rick,' Mrs. James pleaded. 'He did everything for the best.'

'Hard upon him! Between you, you have let my daughter go to her ruin. Do you think there can be much softness in me for any one of you? Hard upon him; hard upon the man who sent a coundrel into my house with a false character! I wish to God the days were not over when men shot each other down like dogs for a maller injury.'

'He's an old man, Richard, and has been a good friend to you. Remember that.'

'I'll remember my daughter. You've no call to look so scared, woman. I shall keep my hands off him. Nothing I could do to him would be any good to her. I want to find my daughter. Do you think any shame that has fallen upon her will lessen my love? I want to find her, that's all, to take her away with me to the other end of the world. Once let me hold her in my arms, I'll answer for the rest. There doesn't live upon this earth the man who could divide us; no, not if he was her husband.'

He went out into the calm summer night, all the stars shining down upon him from the vault above, not with the fiery lustre of those planets which he had watched of late, but with a milder, holier beam, that touched his heart like a memory of the past. O, dear familiar garden, where he had been so happy with the child of his love! the dumb inanimate things cried out to him like living voices. The home-look of the place struck him with a sharper anguish than he had suffered yet. Everything was unchanged—and she was gone! He passed quickly through the garden, steeling himself against this anguish; out at the wicket-gate, through the fragrant meadow, and on by that footpath along which Grace had gone to her doom.

Kingsbury was awake yet. It was ten o'clock when Richard Redmayne crossed the common after half an hour's sharp walking; but the lights still trembled feebly in the general shop; and the three public-houses, which made a kind of fiery triangle, a terrestrial constellation on the village green, were still in the full flush of trade.

How strange all things seemed to the wanderer, and yet how familiar! Had he been away half a century, or only a week? What a stagnant world it was compared to that he had lived in of late! It seemed as if the same village idlers were gossiping at the open door of the Coach and Horses; the same clumsy figure leaning against the doorpost, pipe in mouth; the same carrier's horse drinking at the trough.

He passed them by, with a sense of seeing them dimly as in a dream; yet even with this dreamlike feeling there was blended the thought of how he should have come upon this same spot, these same people, had all been well with him, their noisy welcome, their eager interest in him as an adventurer and a hero. He could see the picture of himself amidst a circle of curious friendly faces, telling the story of his travels.

He passed them by unnoticed, and walked straight on to the green palings before Mr. Wort's trim dwelling—one of the neatest habitations in Kingsbury—a square box of a house, with dazzling green blinds, and a little flight of dazzling stone steps leading up to a great brass plate, so large as almost to extinguish the door that sustained it.

The land-steward was a bachelor, and throughout the period of

Mr. Wort had sat on one chair, on one side of his hearth, and he had worn a shabby patch in the carpet at that particular spot. As Mr. Wort never, or hardly ever, received visitors, all the chairs had spent their lifetime ranged with their backs to the walls of the small square parlour, and had the air of being immovable, and not intended for mankind to sit upon. That was the corner of the parlour hearth, and a corner of the mantelpiece where he put his pipe, and a little iron bedstead to sleep upon comprised Mr. Wort's occupation of his own house. He took his meals in the kitchen: it saved messing in the parlour, his householders thought—there being a notion current in Kingsbury that a kitchen was an apartment too sacred for the vulgar uses of humanity. Mr. Wort in his inmost heart rather preferred the kitchen floor, with its bright Kidderminster carpet, and glass chimney, to the mantelpiece. For his actual work he had a little shed built out at the side of his house, where he paid wages, and wrote letters on a battered old ink-stained desk. There was a light in the window of this office; so Mr. Redmayne, when he came to the narrow half-glass door, turned the handle, and

Mr. Wort was looking over a bundle of papers by the light of a lamp, frowning meditatively as he did his work. He looked only on the opening of the door, and at sight of Richard Redmayne started as if he had seen a ghost.

'What!' he cried. 'Why, I thought you were in Australia!' 'Do you think that I was going to stay there for ever?' the other asked grimly. 'I suppose you did, or you would hardly have come go-between, and sent a villain into my house to ruin my

Mr. Redmayne bounded off his stool, crimson to the roots of his hair.

'No man upon earth but you said as much as that to me, Richard Redmayne, I'd knock him down.'

'Want to know who this man is—by what right you put him in your house,' the other went on, without the faintest notice of Mr. Redmayne's remonstrance.

'The man I introduced to your family is a gentleman. I had no right to suppose that any harm would come of the introduction, and you have no right to say that harm has come of it. He denies it in your daughter's disappearance, and I can see no evidence against him. He had been away from Brierwood two months when she left her home. There is nothing to connect him with the event.'

'Who is he? Tell me that!' cried Richard Redmayne, with his back against the office-door, as if he would have barred the entrance until he had heard what he wanted to hear.

'I shall tell you no more than you know already. I took the trouble to go up to town and see him about this business; taxed him with being concerned in your daughter's disappearance—in plain words, with being the man she went away to marry—and he denied it as plainly. I won't have him bothered any more about it. I'm very sorry for you, Richard Redmayne; and, upon my soul, I believe I loved your daughter Grace as well as if she'd been a child of my own; but I won't be the means of bringing about any mischief between you two.'

'You mean that you won't tell me where to find him?'

'Certainly not. He has been taxed with the crime, and denies it. What more could you do than I have done?'

Richard Redmayne smiled—a smile that made the steward shiver.

'What do you think a father should do whose child has been stolen from him like that?' he asked. 'Never mind what I could do. Tell me who he is and where I am to find him—that's all I want from you, John Wort.'

'If you questioned me till doomsday, you'd get no more out of me than I've said already. The man is a gentleman—I can't believe him capable of playing the villain. What evidence is there against him? Why fix upon him in this savage way? Why must he needs be your daughter's only admirer? She was the prettiest girl for twenty miles round Kingsbury, and may have had half-a-dozen sweethearts.'

'She was as pure as a child!' cried the farmer.

'Granted; but she may have listened to some gentleman-lover, for all that, and may have been tempted away by a promise of marriage. The man may have kept his word. She may be a happy married woman, for anything we know to the contrary.'

'That's not likely,' said Richard Redmayne, with a groan. 'She wouldn't have kept aloof from those that loved her—if—if she wasn't ashamed to face them. But I won't stop to bandy words about my girl. Let me find her when and where I may, she can't have sunk so low but she'll be high enough to reach her father's heart; yet it's hard to think of such a flower trampled upon. Good-night, John Wort. I've counted you a friend for the last twenty years, and to-night you've taught me the value of friendship. By ———, man, if it wasn't for your gray hairs, I'd wring the answers I want out of you as if you were a wet rag! And you fancy you'll prevent my finding that villain? Why, if London was twenty times bigger than it is, I'd hunt him down; or if he had turned his back on London and gone to the other end of the earth, I'd find him out. Be sure of that, John Wort; and when I do find him, you'll hear of it.'

He left the office as abruptly as he had entered it. The steward stood by his desk fumbling nervously with his papers, his eyes down-

cast, his aspect conscience-stricken. The criminal himself would have faced the situation boldly enough, no doubt; but this innocent accessory before the fact drooped under the burden of another man's evil-doing. He had loved Grace Redmayne, and had a warm regard for Grace's father. But he held it a duty to shield Hubert Walgrave—if he were indeed the offender; and who could be sure that he was, until Grace's own lips denounced him? At present there was so little evidence against him, and he had denied any knowledge of her flight. John Wort was strong upon this point; although, as a man of the world, he attached no great value to the denial.

'If a man had committed a murder, he'd hardly tell any one for the asking where he'd hidden the knife,' the steward had remarked to his housekeeper and confidential adviser, an ancient dame much tormented by rheumatism, and attached to him by the bonds of cousinship and long service.

'A pretty kettle-of-fish! And all brought about by doing that young man a kindness,' he muttered by and by, as he sat with his papers before him, trying to bring back his mind to that calm level of businesslike meditation from which Richard Redmayne had disturbed him. 'But he comes of a bad stock, and I ought to have known that no good could ever arise out of any dealings with that lot. He seemed so different from his father, though; such a steady studious kind of fellow. I had every reason to suppose he might be trusted.'

CHAPTER XX.

'WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WOULD IMPART TO ME?'

WHEN the passage of time had familiarised Richard Redmayne with the fact of his loss, when he had grown a little more accustomed to the aspect of Brierwood without Grace—and at best it seemed to him like a house in which a corpse was lying—he was able to turn up the few facts that much questioning had elicited from Mrs. Ames.

The uttermost that she could tell him came to very little. She had fancied herself watchful and careful enough of her niece's honour, and had seen no ground for suspicion of the stranger's integrity.

'I don't think for the first three weeks I ever had my eyes off Grace while he was in the house,' she said, defending herself against her brother-in-law's charge of neglect, 'for fear he should be turning her head with foolish compliments, or anything of that kind.'

'For the first three weeks!' echoed Richard Redmayne bitterly; and after that I suppose you shut your eyes and ears, and let him say what he pleased to her.'

'I mayn't have watched them quite so close, Richard. I knew Grace was a good girl, and he seemed a perfect gentleman; fifteen

years older than her, too, if he was an hour; and wrapped up in his books.'

And then Hannah Redmayne told the story of that vanished summer-time as it had seemed to her unpoetic mind—a bald bare outline of commonplace facts, which evoked no image in the brain of the listener. There had been a picnic, and Mr. Walgry had been attentive to Grace, but not remarkably attentive. She had fainted, and he had been sorry, and very kind. And shortly after leaving Brierwood he had sent her a handsome gold locket, as an acknowledgment of her aunt's attention to him. That was all: let Richard Redmayne make out of it what he might.

He could make very little of it: only that his daughter was gone from him, and that this was the only man who had come athwart her pathway.

Investigation showed him that the means his brother and his brother's wife had taken to find the missing girl were of the slightest. James had gone up to London, and had consulted an old schoolfellow, a solicitor in a very obscure way of business, who had sent him to a private-inquiry office. The chief of the private-inquiry office had said 'advertise,' and had opened an eager paw for funds with which to pay for advertisements; but this James Redmayne had positively refused to do. He didn't want the whole county of Kent to know that his niece had gone astray. The private inquirer had suggested that his advertisement might be so worded as to be intelligible only to the niece herself; but James was inflexible. To advertise was to publish the family dishonour—if dishonour it were.

'No,' he said doggedly; 'if you can't find Gracey without putting her in the papers, I'll wait till her father comes home. *He'll* find her fast enough, I'll warrant.'

Simple-hearted James had an inordinate faith in his brother Rick. Whatever mortal man could do, Rick could do; and the service of professional private inquirers would be as nothing compared with the untutored intelligence of Richard Redmayne.

The first thing Richard did was to advertise in the *Times*, two other London daily papers, and the two local weeklies:

'GRACE.—Your father is at home. Return, or write. Love, welcome, pardon.'

The advertisement appeared day after day, week after week, month after month. People speculated about it, became familiar with the sight of it, and at last came to regard it as a standing portion of their journal, like the printer's name and address at the foot of the last column. And while they speculated and wondered, and anon grew indifferent, Richard Redmayne paced the streets of London in the long summer days, and far into the dismal autumn, looking for his daughter and his daughter's seducer.

He did not even know the name of the man he wanted to find. Hannah Redmayne had never called her lodger anything but Mr. Walgry, and it was as Mr. Walgry she described him to her brother-in-law. When asked to write the name, she made several wild attempts, and in every one of them lost herself in a labyrinth of consonants. She could have as easily written the titles of John Milton's prose works.

'How should I know how to spell his name?' she exclaimed at last, feeling that those various combinations of consonants hardly looked feasible. 'I never saw it wrote anywhere, and I never was much of a hand at writing. I can keep my dairy accounts with any ease, and keep 'em correct to a sixpence; but it aint likely I should be able to write a name as I've never seen. I know he was called Walgry, and that's all I do know about it.'

It was for a man called Walgry, therefore, that Richard Redmayne made his search; a hunter not gifted with those attributes most needed for the following an obscure trail and the tracking down of a foe, but with an indomitable resolution, and a firm belief in his own power to discover the man who had wronged him.

He looked for a man called Walgry, ignorant of almost every particular of the man's existence, assisted only by the faintest word-picture of the being whom he sought; and behold, even the man called Walgrave had vanished off the face of the earth, so far as the name is the man, and had given place to H. W. Harcross, Q.C., of Eastdon-crescent, Grosvenor-place; an elliptic arc of monster newly-built mansions, a little more florid in their architectural embellishment than the mansions of Acropolis-square, but cast more or less the same mould. Hubert Walgrave was gone, and there remained only this H. W. Harcross, popularly known as the man who had married old Vallory's daughter. The time had yet to come in which the barrister should make a reputation strong enough to outweigh his wife's fortune.

There is no need to dwell upon those dreary days, and the heart-break that came with them. The strong man, who had returned from his two years' exile full of pride and triumph, was not broken yet, was indeed of a stuff not easily crushed; but there were gray streaks in the yeoman's dark-brown hair, deeply-cut lines about the light gray eyes, a look of settled weariness in his face, as of one who has hoped against hope until the faculty of hoping has been worn out of him.

He had not been content with that advertisement in the London and Kentish papers, but he had advertised in *Galvani* and other foreign journals. His appeal had been published so widely that it seemed hardly possible it could have escaped Grace's notice—and would she see it and resist his prayer?

He had written to Nicholas Spettigue by the first mail that left

England after his return, entreating his late partner to hunt up any letters that might have arrived for him before or after he quitted the colony; and Mr. Spettigue had made all necessary inquiries, and had duly forwarded him James Redmayne's laboured epistle containing the tidings of Grace's flight: but no other letter—not that promised letter which the girl herself was to have written to her father.

Meanwhile, during all this bitter period of hope deferred and fast-coming despair, Bulrush Meads, the new estate which was to have been the delight and glory of Rick Redmayne's declining years, lay waste, or flourished only for the advantage of strangers and squatters. It was vital that the farm should be taken in hand speedily, boundaries settled, fences put up, order introduced where all was now only a fruitful wilderness. The consciousness of this was a secondary source of worry and perplexity to the man whose chief absorbing thought was of his missing child. All his dreams had faded. The vision was darkened of that low wide-spreading log-house, with its light verandahs and broad balconies and its romantic aspect, like a Swiss chalet. That airy castle was shattered. He might live to build it up again, he told himself, in his more hopeful moods, when he had found his daughter; but in the interval those fertile acres, for which he had paid with the sweat of his brow, were lying waste.

He decided on sending his brother and his brother's family to take the estate in hand. He was fain to confess that James and those two hulking sons of his had done wonders with Brierwood. What might they not do in that wider, richer field? He could manage the Kentish farm himself, and keep a home open for his lost girl—the room in which she had slept from her infancy to the fatal hour of her flight ready to receive her.

He mooted the question one evening, when he had come down from his London lodging to the farm for a few hours' respite: painted a glowing picture of Bulrush Meads, but spoke with a latent bitterness, remembering all the schemes and hopes that had been associated with his possession of the place. His proposal was at first received with horror by Mrs. James, who was the sole voice of the assembly, no member of her family presuming to think or speak for himself in her presence. What! leave Brierwood, and the country in which she had been born and bred, to go and associate with red Indians—people who scalped each other and lived in wigwams, or if not red Indians, something quite as bad—Blackamoors perhaps! She would sooner starve than taste a bit of victuals that had been touched by a Blackamoor.

Rick Redmayne explained that the Blackamoor element need not enter into the business. The aboriginal Australian might be dark of aspect, but did not abound in the vicinity of Bulrush Meads; emigration was the order of the day; she could have plenty of stalwart Irishmen to till her lands and reap her corn.

'I'd as lief have to do with Blackamoors as Irish,' cried
'It's bad enough to have 'em about at hopping time.'
degrees, however, when the map of the estate with all
notations, suggestions, and calculations made on board
been laid out on the table, and pored over profoundly by
the lads, who might have their opinions, but remained dis-
b; when the extent and glory of the estate, the managing
ired for its direction had been brought home to her, Mrs.
ned, listened with increasing interest, began to ask ques-
this portion of the land and that, and seemed curious as
bilities of the house.

uld be a fine opening for the boys,' James growled at last,
hat his chosen partner wavered.

opening for their galloping about from morning till night
ld beasts,' said the mother of the boys contemptuously;
work they'd do in an outlandish place like that.'

Mrs. Redmayne's manner to speak with contumely of the
thom, in her secret soul, she doated on, urged thereto by
maternal duty. So no doubt did Cornelia flout and dis-
Gracchi in their adolescence.

eech had for once been injudicious. At the prospect of
ng of savage beasts the two boys broke out into broad
netuous chuckles expressive of rapture.

, wouldn't that be a jolly game!' cried the elder hope.
ten old Wort lets us have a pop at the rabbits in Clevedon
out yonder there'd be wild buffaloes, and kangaroos, and
nows what to shoot at; eh, uncle?'

onder,' cried Richard, kindling at the thought of that wider
e he had been so successful—'out yonder you'd have as
as the kings and their barons had in the days when half
is forest, and it was death for a peasant to kill a stag.
uy a horse over there, and a good one, for a five-pound
ay keep as good a stud as Squire Chevenix without feel-
t. Why, you don't know what life is, boys, till you have
the Southern Cross!'

kind of a dairy is there, now, at this Bulrush place?' Mrs.
d thoughtfully.

ys kicked each other in a friendly way under the table, per-
t she was veering round.

there's nothing very ship-shape yet awhile; but there's
oom and plenty of material, and I shouldn't mind spend-
ed or so on the improvement of the place.'

ea of a dairy of her own planning was almost as tempting
nes as that vision of perpetual wild-beast slaughter was to
s. The dairy at Brierwood was all holes and corners, she
not room in it to swing a cat, though there were inlets

enough through which the cats could come to steal the cream. An archetypal dairy had always been one of the matron's pet day-dreams. The ocean was an untried element, which she regarded with a natural horror; but if anything could tempt her to cross the world in search of perfect bliss, it would be that idea of a farmhouse adapted and improved on her own plan.

So, after much debating of difficulties which at first seemed insurmountable, Hannah Redmayne consented to the enterprise; and with her the whole family: the young men having panted for Australia from the moment the subject was started; James, their father, with the docility of a well-trained husband—if Hannah saw it in a favourable light, why, he had no 'objections,' he said in his milk-and-waterish way. He made no doubt but he would be useful as his brother's agent, biding the time when Rick would come out himself and lick the land into a fair shape. He hadn't much of a fancy for a sea voyage, never having trusted himself on wilder floods than Thames or Medway; but as other folks made light enough of going to Australia, and Rick himself had been there and come back safe and sound, there was no call for him to make any bones about it. In brief, he expressed himself willing to do whatsoever his wife and his brother desired.

All things were settled, therefore, before that evening's counsel was concluded. James and his family were to go out to Brisbane, as soon as their travelling arrangements could be made, and thence to Bulrush Meads, where they were to take possession and establish themselves with full power to order all things according to their own discretion. By and by, when Grace was restored to him—Richard Redmayne spoke of that event as a certain fact—he would in all probability let Brierwood, and bring his daughter to that wild home in the backwoods; but his coming would in no wise disturb or dispossess James and Hannah. There would be ample room and verge enough for the two families.

'We've worked together pretty well so far, Jim,' said Rick, 'and there's no reason we shouldn't go on. You can manage the land well for me, and make a good living out of it for yourself; and by and by, when I come out, I'll make you my partner, with as big a share of profits as if you had contributed half the capital.'

The family, with one accord, pronounced this a very handsome offer, and they shook hands upon it all round. Up in their attic that night in the gabled roof, the two lads felt scarcely disposed to go to bed, so completely had this scheme of emigration taken hold of them. They would fain have begun packing their clumsy wooden trunks immediately, and have neither rested nor slumbered till they were on board ship.

'There ain't any overland way to Australia, is there, Jack?' the younger inquired curiously.

John Redmayne opined that there was not.

'I'm sorry for that,' said Charley; 'it would have been a jolly game to ride half the way on camels!'

Within a month from this family conference, Mr. and Mrs. James and their two sons departed with bag and baggage, after a farewell visit from the married daughter and her bantlings, who came from Chickfield to weep and lament over this uprooting of her race from the soil that had nourished it. The Chickfield grocer came to fetch his wife home, and gave utterance to ambitious and revolutionary views of his own with reference to the great colony. He had it in him, he avowed, to do great things in a new country: had ideas about mixed teas and the improvement of coffee in connection with roasted beans; to say nothing of the manipulation of Dorset butter, for which he had a peculiar gift—only to be developed in a wider sphere than Chickfield, where the prejudices and narrow-mindedness of his customers stifled every aspiration of genius.

They went. Rick Redmayne stood upon the pier at Gravesend and saw the great ship fade into a speck on the blue horizon, and felt that on this side of the world he was now alone—with his daughter.

The year had well-nigh come to an end before the yeoman's courage and confidence in himself wore out; but in the dreary December days, after so many futile efforts, so many false hopes, he did at last begin to lose faith in his own power to find his child or his child's seducer, and to cast about him for help. From the first he had kept his own counsel—telling no one his grief, asking no aid from sage advisers by way of friendship or profession. He wanted to keep his daughter's secret inviolate—his daughter's name from the breath of scandal. No one but those of his own household knew the address of his London lodging—a darksome second floor in a street near the Strand—or the nature of the business that detained him in London. He had paid all his debts, and shaken hands with his creditors and thanked them for their forbearance; had seen little more of his Kingsbury friends or acquaintance since his return from Australia. So far as it was possible he held himself aloof from all who had ever known him. Finally, however, after six months wasted in vain endeavours to discover some trace of his lost daughter, the conviction came slowly home to him that his own brave heart and strong arm were not enough for the work he had to do. He went to a solicitor—a man who had arranged some small business matters for him occasionally—and put a case hypothetically, as if in the interest of a friend.

A young woman was missing, had run away from home to be married, and had never been heard of since. What steps should the father take?

Mr. Smoothey, the solicitor—Smoothey and Gabb, Gray's-in-place—rubbed his chin meditatively.

'How long has the young woman been missing?' he asked.

'Thirteen months.'

'A long time. Your friend should have gone to work sooner.'

'My friend has been at work for the last six months.'

Mr. Smoothey looked at his client sharply from under penthouse-like pepper-and-salt-coloured eyebrows, and suspected the real story of the case.

'What has he been doing during that time?' he inquired.

'Looking for his daughter everywhere: in public places, churches, theatres, parks, streets, omnibuses, shops, up and down, here and there, from morning till night, till his body has grown as weary as his heart; day after day, week after week, month after month, without rest or respite.'

'Pshaw!' cried the lawyer impatiently. 'Your friend must live in one street and his daughter in the next for a twelvemonth and the two never come across each other. The man must be mad. To look for a girl in London, without any plan or system; why, it's like finding a proverbial needle in a bottle of hay must be an easy find compared to that. Your friend must be daft, Redmayne.'

'He has had enough trouble to make him so,' the farmer answered quietly.

'I'm heartily sorry for him. But to go to work in that *ad hoc* way, instead of getting good advice at the outset! In the first place, how does he know that his daughter is in London? How does he know that she isn't in New York?'

'He has some reason to suppose that she is in London. The man who is suspected of tempting her away is a man who lives in London.'

'But, bless my soul, if you—if your friend knows the man who ran away with the girl, he can surely find her by applying to that man.'

'The man who is suspected denies any knowledge of my daughter—'

Richard Redmayne stopped suddenly, and reddened to the temples.

'The murder's out,' he said. 'It's *my* daughter who's missing. Mr. Smoothey. You'll keep my secret, of course. I want to shield her from slander by and by, when I take her home.'

'I guessed as much before you'd said half-a-dozen words about the business,' remarked the lawyer in a friendly reassuring tone. 'Your face was too earnest for a man who's talking of a friend's affairs. The more candid you are with me, the better I can help you.'

On this Rick Redmayne told his story, as briefly as it could

d, while the lawyer listened, with a grave and not unsympathetic countenance.

Have you any grounds for supposing that there would be no objection; that this Mr. Walgry would deceive your daughter?' he asked, when he had heard all.

Only the fact of my daughter's silence. If—if all had been as she would have hardly left her father in doubt as to her fate. My poor child knew how well I loved her. And then a man who would not act honestly would scarcely steal a girl away from her home without notice.'

The manner of the business, and the girl's silence, look bad, don't they,' replied Mr. Smoothey. 'Her letter stated that they were married in London, you say—you might give me a copy of the letter, by the way. Have you made any attempt to discover whether such a marriage took place?'

How could I do that?'

Advertise for information on the subject, offering a reward to clerks, registrars, and suchlike.'

What! and blazon my girl's dishonour to the world?'

Mr. Smoothey smiled ever so faintly at this—as if the world were interested in the fate of a Kentish yeoman's daughter. You could hardly advertise without making the girl's name public, certainly,' he said; 'and that might do her mischief in the long run.'

The written word remains. Put an advertisement in to-morrow's *Times* about Tom, Dick, or Harry, and the odds are five to one it may crop up as evidence against Tom, Dick, or Harry at the other end of the world forty years hence. Upon my word, Mr. Redmayne, I can't see that you have any resource open to you except to put yourself in the hands of one of these private-inquiring agents.'

My brother Jim did that, and no good came out of it.'

Never mind what your brother did. I know a man who can do it for you, if any one can; as sharp a fellow as there is to be found in London. He served his articles with me, and practised as a solicitor for nine years in a small town in the west of England; took to drinking, and went altogether to the bad; then came up to London, and set up as a private inquirer. He drinks still, but has somewhat recovered in his madness, and can do more work in his own particular line than any other man I ever met with. I'll have him here to-morrow, if you like, to-morrow morning, and we can talk the business over together.'

I suppose I can't do better than put myself in your hands,' said Redmayne said gloomily. 'I reckoned upon finding my girl; but I'm sick at heart. I feel as if a few months more of this sort of work would make an end of me.'

Mr. Smoothey suggested that fathers and daughters are in the

hands of Providence, and that things must not be looked at in this manner.

'What!' cried Rick, 'do you want me to think that my child and I are like two pieces upon a chessboard, to be moved this way or that, with no power of our own to shape our lives? I tell you, man, I *will* find her, *will* save her, *will* take her from the villain who stole her away from me!'

'May God prosper your endeavours, my good friend!' said the lawyer piously; 'but that is hardly a Christian way of looking at the question.'

'I have never been a Christian since I came home to England, and found my daughter missing,' answered Richard Redmayne.

He met Mr. Kendel, the private inquirer, at Messrs. Gabb and Smoothey's office early next morning. Mr. Kendel was a tall bony man of about forty, with dark close-cut hair, a long red nose, a coal-black eye of fiery brightness, glittering as that of the Ancient Mariner, a clean-shaven visage, a good black coat, and as respectable an appearance as could coexist with the aforesaid red nose; a clever-looking man, in whose hands Richard Redmayne felt himself a very child.

He jotted down two or three memoranda in a little black-bound notebook, and then snapped the snap thereof with the air of a man who saw his way to the end of the business.

'If a marriage took place in London, I shall have the evidence of it in a week,' he said. 'If anywhere in England, I pledge myself to know all about it within a fortnight.' And on this the council broke up, Mr. Smoothey having done nothing but take snuff and look ineffably wise during the consultation.

At the end of a fortnight Mr. Kendel wrote to Richard Redmayne, stating that to the best of his belief no marriage between Miss Grace Redmayne and any individual whatever had been celebrated within the British dominions since last November twelvemonth. He had put the business into good hands on the Continent, and hoped shortly to be able to speak as definitely with regard to any foreign marriage which might or might not have been contracted. In the mean time he was hunting for information about Mr. Walgry, but as yet had not been able to get on the track of any person of that name answering to the description of the suspected party.

Richard flung the letter from him in a rage.

'Easy enough to tell me what he can't find out,' he muttered to himself moodily. 'Jim was about right; these fellows are no good.'

He left Mr. Kendel's letter unanswered, and went on with his own unsystematic wanderings: now in the remotest purlieus of the east, or in the haunts of sailors at Wapping and Ratcliff-highway; now among half-deserted western squares, whose denizens were

spending their Christmas holidays at pleasant country houses. He sat in sparsely-filled theatres, indifferent to, nay hardly conscious of, what he saw, but peering into every dusky corner of the house, with the faint hope of seeing the sweet pale face he was looking for.

Christmas came and went. Richard Redmayne heard the joy-bells clamouring from half a hundred London steeples, and that was all. Christmas—O God, how well he remembered Christmas at Brierwood a few years ago, his daughter's face radiant among the holly and mistletoe, the simple pleasures and banquetings, the quiet home joys!

'Shall we ever sit beside that hearth again?' he wondered; 'we two together, my girl and I?'

Bitter as this ignorance of his child's fate had been to him, a bitterer knowledge was to come. One bleak morning in January, about five weeks after his introduction to Mr. Kendel, the office-boy from Gabb and Smoothey brought him a brief note, requesting his immediate presence in Gray's-inn-place.

He followed promptly on the heels of the messenger, and was shown straight into Mr. Smoothey's office. The lawyer was standing on his hearth-rug warming himself, with a solemn aspect. Mr. Kendel was seated by the table with a short file of newspapers before him.

'You have got some news for me,' Richard Redmayne cried eagerly, going straight up to the private inquirer.

'Do not be in a hurry, my dear Mr. Redmayne,' the lawyer said soothingly. 'There is news: Kendel has made a discovery, as he supposes; but the fact in question, if it does concern you, is of the saddest nature. I am bound to bid you prepare your mind for the worst.'

'My God!' cried Richard Redmayne. 'It is the thing I have thought and dreamed of a hundred times. My daughter has destroyed herself!'

'Not so bad as that. Pray sit down; calm yourself. We may be mistaken.'

'The date is the same,' said Kendel gravely. 'Miss Redmayne left home on the 11th November.'

'Was your daughter a sufferer from heart-disease, Mr. Redmayne?'

'No—certainly not, to my knowledge. But her mother died of it; dropped down dead at four-and-twenty years of age. Why do you beat about the bush? Is my daughter dead?'

'We have some reason to fear as much; but I repeat we may be mistaken. The fact of the two events occurring on the same date might be a mere coincidence. You had better read those paragraphs, Kendel. Let Mr. Redmayne know the worst.'

Mr. Kendel turned over the papers, rather nervously. He was accustomed to be employed in painful affairs; but this seemed to

him more painful than the common run of family troubles. Richard Redmayne's listening face, white to the lips, told of no common agony.

'It appears,' he began in a quiet business-like way, 'that Miss Redmayne left her home early on the morning of the 11th November. From that hour to this nothing has been heard of her. Now, having occasion some days ago to look through a file of old newspapers in relation to another case I have on hand, I came upon the notice of an inquest held on a young lady who died suddenly on that day—a young lady whose christian name was Grace, and whose age was nineteen; a young lady who had arrived in the neighbourhood of London from the country, within an hour of her death. Shall I read you the account of the inquest?'

'Yes.'

The word came with a strange muffled sound from dry white lips.

Mr. Kendel read first one paragraph, and then two or three others, from different papers. One was more diffuse than the rest, a small weekly paper published at Highgate. This gave a detailed account of the inquest—headed, 'Sad and sudden Death of a young Lady,'—and dwelt on the beauty of the deceased with the penny-a-liner's flourish.

'The man called himself Walsh,' Richard Redmayne said, at last, 'and describes the girl as his sister.'

'He would be likely to suppress his real name under such painful circumstances, and to conceal his real relation with the young lady. Mind, I don't say that this poor girl must needs have been your daughter—coincidences are common enough in this life; but the christian name, the age, the date all agree. Even the initial is the same—Walgry, Walsh. Come, Mr. Redmayne, it is a hard thing to trace your daughter's steps only to find the track broken off short by a grave; but not so hard as to find your child as many a man has done, in something worse than the grave.'

This was quite a burst of sentiment for Mr. Kendel; but his heart, not utterly dried up by alcohol, was touched by the silent grief of the yeoman. That despair, which betrayed itself only by the ghastly change in the man's face, the altered sound of the man's voice, was more awful than any loud expression of sorrow.

'Do you consider this clue worth following up, Mr. Redmayne?'

'Yes, I will follow it, and the murderer of my child afterwards,' answered the yeoman.

He sat down at the table by Mr. Kendel's side, and wrote the name of the coroner and some particulars of the inquest in his pocket-book. The private inquirer watched him curiously, wondering a little at the firmness of his hand as he wrote.

'Shall I follow up this affair for you, Mr. Redmayne?' he asked.

'No, I'll do that myself. If—if the girl who died that day was my daughter, I am the likeliest person to find it out; but if I fail, I can fall back upon your professional skill. You shall be paid your own price for what you have done.'

'Thank you, sir. I wish with all my heart I could have brought you pleasanter news. Have you any photograph of your daughter, by the way? That would help you to settle the question.'

'Yes. I have her portrait,' answered Richard Redmayne, touching his breast. He had carried his daughter's picture in his breast-pocket all through his Australian wanderings; only a rustic photographer's image, a small wistful face, which would hardly be taken for the face of a beautiful woman, colour, life, expression—so much that made the beauty of the original being wanting in this pale reflection.

It was settled, therefore, that Mr. Redmayne should go to Highgate himself, hunt up the coroner, and follow the clue afforded by those newspaper paragraphs as far as it might lead him.

He went, found the coroner, and the doctor who had been called in at Hillside Cottage, when Grace lay dead in her lover's arms. From this latter he obtained a close description of the dead girl—the fair oval face, small nose and mouth, a little mole just under the rounded chin, the reddish-auburn hair.

There was no doubt it was his Grace. He had tracked her to the end of her brief pilgrimage. All his dreams of the future were over; the fair home in which they were to have begun a new life together, all the plans and hopes which had buoyed him up during that weary period of waiting, were done with now. Alas, whatever life they two were to share lay beyond the stars! Upon earth his search had ended.

'Except for the man who murdered her,' Rick Redmayne said to himself. 'God grant that I may live long enough to be even with him!'

He went to the house in which his darling died. There had been more than one set of tenants since that November day; but the cottage was vacant again, and a board advertising the fact of its emptiness was up in the neat little front garden: 'Inquire of Mr. Selby, house-agent, Kentish Town; or within.'

Richard Redmayne went in, saw the little drawing-room where she had fallen, struck with death; the pretty bedchamber above where they had laid her in her last quiet slumber. He looked at these things with an anguish beyond tears—beyond passion, or curses even—although deep in his heart there was something bitterer than a curse against her betrayer.

'Perhaps that man Kendel was right,' he said to himself, as he stood by the white-curtained bed, on which he could fancy her lying in death's awful stillness with her hands folded on her breast; 'per-

haps it was better she should die than live to be what that villain meant to make her. Thank God she never was his mistress! thank God death came between them! And yet to have had my girl again—even a faded flower—to have watched the pale face grow bright again; to have made a new life for her in a new world—O God, how sweet that would have been!

He thought of Bulrush Meads; those fertile slopes and valleys, the silver water-courses and forest background—all their glory gone now. Thought of the place as he had pictured it from the first, with that central figure, the child of his love. Without it what availed those green pastures, those crystal streams? what were they but a desert waste without Grace?

An old woman was taking care of the house, an ancient beldame, with one shoulder higher than the other.

'I helped 'em to lay her out, poor dear!' she mumbled, when Richard questioned her about the young lady who had died suddenly in that house a little more than a year ago. 'Such a pretty creetur', with lovely auburn hair down to her waist. I never see her alive, though I was here when the gentleman took the house.'

'You saw him, then?' Richard cried eagerly.

'I should think I did. I sor him arter she was dead. O, so gashly pale—paler than the corpse a'most, and so orful quiet. Ah, it was a queer set-out altogether! When he took the house, it was for his young wife, he said; when the ingquiss come, it was his sister. Whatever she was, he was precious fond of her. I was in the house till a hour before they came, helping the servants to finish the clean-in' and suchlike; and to see the things as he'd sent in—flowers, and hothouse fruit, and partials of all sorts; birds, and a pianer that was a perfeck pictur' only to look at. Yes, whoever she was, he was rare and fond of her.'

'May the memory of her cling to him to his dying day,' muttered Rick Redmayne, 'poison his life, and blight him on his deathbed!'

The crone was too deaf to hear this smothered imprecation. She went on mumbling about the 'sweet young creetur'.

'What was the man like?' Mr. Redmayne asked her presently.

'Mr. Walsh.'

'Yes, Mr. Walsh.'

'Rather a handsome man. Tall and straight and dark—not so young as she was by ten year or more, but a fine-lookin' man.'

'Do you know what became of him after the inquest?'

'No more than the babe unborn. He paid a month's rent, packed up all the silk dresses, and slippers, and suchlike, into a big portmenter, had it put on the top of a keb, and rode away with it. The kebmán as took him would know where he went—none of us knowed.'

'And you don't know where the cabman came from, I suppose?'



Louis Hurd, del.

Edmund Evans

A VOW OF VENGEANCE.

'Lord, no, sir; he was fetched promiscuous. Mr. Walsh paid for everything liberal; paid the cook and 'ousemaid their month, and paid me; paid the undertaker—it were a very genteel funeral, mourning-coach and pair, and feathers on the 'earse; paid everybody, and nobody ast him no questions. But it was a queer set-out for all that; and there must have been somethink to make that pore young creetur' go off dead like that.'

'Something,' muttered Richard; 'yes—only a broken heart. She discovered that she had trusted a villain, and the discovery killed her. The story's plain enough.'

This to himself rather than to the crone, whose dull ears did, however, distinguish those two words, 'broken heart.'

'Broken 'art? Yes, pore dear,' she whined, 'that's azackly what the 'ousemaid says, while we was a-smoothing out her beautiful hair: "There was somethink as he told her—a somethink as he said to her soon after she came in—as broke her pore 'art;" and that 'ousemaid spoke the gospel truth. It might be a diseased 'art, there's no gainsaying the doctor; but it were a broken one into the bargain.'

Two hours later on the same afternoon, when the winter daylight was growing gray and thick, Richard Redmayne stood alone in Hetheridge churchyard: a very quiet resting-place, remote, although within fifteen miles of London, the burial-ground belonging to a village that lay off the main road, away from the beaten tracks of mankind—an unambitious graveyard, where there were no splendid monuments, only an air of supreme repose.

'There will be no stone to mark where she lies, I reckon,' Mr. Redmayne said to himself bitterly, as he walked slowly to and fro among the humble headstones. 'A man would hardly set up a memorial of his sin.'

He was mistaken. Not in a nameless grave did Grace Redmayne slumber. He came at last to a broad slab of polished gray granite, with an inscription in three short lines:

GRACE.

Died November 11th, 186-, aged 19.

EHEU, EHEU!

Her epitaph could hardly have been briefer: and thus her story closed—with a tombstone.

'I wonder where *he* will be buried when his time comes?' thought Rick Redmayne; 'for as there is a God above us, if ever we two meet face to face, I shall kill him!'

And he meant it.

AT DINNER

WHAT to cook, and how and when to cook it, are questions not very likely to have vexed the minds of our early predecessors, the first life-tenants of our fair estate, the world. The hunter is proverbially gifted with a fine appetite, which stands in no need of sharpening by other sauces than that of hunger, while the pastoral races are uniformly simple in their tastes and frugal as to their diet. Wealth and luxury must have made some progress before the question, how to obtain a dinner, gives way to the more æsthetic difficulty as to how that dinner shall be rendered grateful to the palate. Very rude ideas on such a subject seem at first, as was natural, to have prevailed. The brass-greaved Achæians, who lay so long in their weary leaguer around white-walled Troy, had scarcely passed beyond the rudimentary stage of kitchen-lore. The Homeric banquets are but records of mighty roasts, where whole kids and quarters of oxen revolved before piles of blazing logs, and where the sole merit of a feast was its Gargantuan abundance. Certainly the kinglets of Argos and of Ithaca had far outstripped the Iroquois, munching his raw venison on the darkling shores of Lake Huron, or those Lestrygonians whom Herodotus registered as subsisting on uncooked meat; but simple roast and boiled were all that they had to carve with their bronze-bladed daggers upon their platters of smooth beech-wood.

It is to Egypt, the dim mysterious birthplace of the arts of peace and war, that we owe the first germs of scientific cookery. Not brave men only, but clever cooks as well, flourished before Agamemnon; but it was in Thebes and Memphis that they wielded the official ladle. It was dearth, indeed, which drove Joseph's kindred tribe into Goshen, and the first rebellious murmurs of the departing Israelites referred directly to the soup-kettles of Egypt. The very mention of the objects regretfully looked back to, of the cucumbers, the onions, and the leeks, spoken of in the same breath with the 'fleshpots' of the great heathen empire, explains the superior attractions of the kitchens beside the Yellow Nile. Egypt and Mesopotamia, richly tilled and irrigated like a market-garden, overflowed with vegetables at a time when Europe and Western Asia had few or none. With its granaries full of corn, its uplands white with sheep, and its cattle grazing in thousands on meadows which have gradually been rendered sterile by the encroaching sand of the desert, the Nile Valley might well present an appearance of material prosperity such as aroused the envy of its neighbours. There was

a splendid court also, sustained by a martial aristocracy and by a powerful priesthood. The Pharaohs, be sure, had cooks as well as chemists and magicians, as well as butlers and bakers, in their imperial household. The Greeks, however, improved considerably upon the teachings of the mother-country of western civilisation. It was the lot of Egypt, in more matters than one, to give lessons which enabled her pupils to surpass their instructress. The sculptors of old Hellas, under whose hands the all-but breathing marbles slowly struggled into being, were but the successors of those toiling stone-hewers of Philæ and Luxor, architects rather than artists, to whose chisels we owe the giant statues in those halls and mummy-pits, where colossal kings and towering deities still impress our fancy by the mere weight of their dimensions and the solemn majesty of their impassive lineaments. As in the studio, so among the sauce-pans, the light bright quality of Grecian wit made its way. An Athenian feast was now no longer, as in the heroic age of spear-throwing, a mere aggregation of roast meat. It was not a heavy meal, but the few dishes that figured on an Attic *menu* were artfully seasoned and neatly served. Hymettus had a crisp short herbage, mixed with thyme, on which the mountain sheep acquired a flavour more delicate than that of lowland mutton. Hybla had honey that keeps, even in the nineteenth century, its old renown, due to a thousand wild-flowers that the bees love well. The blue sea brought fish to the Athenian's very door; and there was no lack of game in the well-wooded and well-watered Greece of the period, before axe and fire had thinned the forests and lessened the rainfall. The vine had then, as now, a sort of clinging affection for the friable soil of the crumbling rocks that face the Mediterranean; and apples could then be grown side by side with luscious purple figs, where now only a range of gray-leaved olive-trees rises along the dusty distance. The Greek made the most and the best, as usual, of his materials. His larder was not always over-brimming, but his table was pretty and trimly garnished, with snows from the heights above Tempe to cool his jar of wine, and with every scrap of tunnyfish and morsel of goat's flesh neatly dished among cool green leaves and blushing roses.

The Persians, who for many a year were accustomed, like the English of the Confessor's reign, to look abroad for a supply of all that could minister to a taste for elegance and luxury, perceived the superiority of the Attic kitchen. They asked Greeks to train their soldiers, to build their cities, to adorn their temples, and to prepare their banquets as well. The Greek *chef*, in his milk-white robes of office, must have been as familiar a personage in the households of Medish satraps and Persian governors-general as was the French man cook in those of the travelled British noblemen of the eighteenth century. Nowhere else than in Hellas or among the Ionian colonies

of Asia Minor could the viceroys of the great king find a cook fit to humour their lordly palates. For Egyptian fare, unimproved while all the world outside the enchanted region of the Nile Valley had been changing, seemed gross and monotonous to those who had eaten of daintier dishes than lentil-soup and black stews of meat and onions, and the Jewish cuisine has always been esteemed too greasy in its fat plenty to attract a less vigorous race of banqueters than the Hebrews. The little that was known of Spain, Gaul, and North Africa came filtered through Greek channels. Babylon and Lydia had fallen beneath the assaults of the Persian arms, and with China and India, cut off from Iran by mountain and wilderness, there was no communication of any kind. The Persian grandees, therefore, sent for Greek cooks, as they summoned Greek pedagogues to teach their sons, Greek lute-players to make music in their halls, and Greek limners to take their portraits. Yet that this was but a compliance with the demands of fashion seems to be proved by the fact that, long after the overthrow of Alexander's crowned lieutenants and their intrusive dynasties, the national kitchen of Persia reasserted itself, and even, under Heliogabalus, became the rage at Rome. The Roman spirit, so strong, so orderly, and yet devoting all its strength and all its wondrous organising power to objects that were of the earth earthy, set cookery on a pedestal for absolute worship. Everywhere else in the world even gluttons had had the grace to be somewhat ashamed of an immoderate fondness for good cheer. The hard practical masters of the earth saw no reason why, having fought and won, they should not enjoy the spoils of victory, and accordingly they exalted kitchen-craft almost to a level with strategy itself. A good Greek cook—one of those *Græculi*, those despised manikins, who came over in swarms to be barbers and musicians, tutors and house-decorators, to their conquerors, and whom the fighting Quirites hired and jeered at—was worth many a silver sesterce of annual wages in Rome. Let him, since he and his race had yet the gift of imagination which their forefathers had put to nobler uses, rack his subtle brains to devise a new pleasure for the gustatory nerves of wealthy knights and senators!

Those knights, those gilded equestrians who fell short of the highest ranks of the patrician caste, were perhaps the most inveterate epicures in materialist, mighty Rome. It was a knight who is credited with inventing gloves, that he might devour the choicest morsels at the board, while his ungloved guests, in that forkless age, hesitated to scald their fingers by snatching at the titbits fresh from the stewpan. It was a knight who gave fourteen hundred pounds of our money for a couple of those giant *murænas* that were tended so carefully in Roman fish-ponds. The passion then entertained for lampreys was as odd, and nearly as costly, as the frenzy of the Dutch for tulips. The ugly eel-like creatures, with their fierce eyes and

their formidable rows of white teeth, swam gently round the marble basin in the middle of the inner atrium, while half a dozen slaves came hurrying with baskets filled with whatever food experts pronounced to fatten these slimy pets the quickest. Well if the master did not insist on tossing in, as a toothsome treat to the lampreys, one of that trembling company of living chattels. Such things have been done, and with impunity, in the wicked old capital of the world. No one having ever, in modern times, seen a true muræna of the enormous size and weight recorded in history, doubts have been thrown on the veracity of the chroniclers. But it is probable that the classic scales really indicated the number of pounds with fair accuracy, but that the live delicacy was not a genuine lamprey, but rather some similar tenant of the waters, such as the huge and voracious *Silurus Glanis*, still found in the Danube and the Theiss. In fattening domestic animals the Romans were proficient. They are believed to have been the first to cram chickens in a coop and to feed fish in a stewpond; and although the Chinese had independently arrived at much the same results, the inhabitants of the seven-hilled city were no copyists. They had a sort of fondness for the pig; an animal whose nature led him to coöperate heartily with their practised efforts to make him as obese as possible, that he might figure creditably on the table; and the consumption of young porkers in a classic mansion was very considerable, to judge by its frequent mention in such fragments of the lighter Latin literature as have come down to us. It would seem that the interesting quadrupeds were kept tame about the outer court and kitchens, and that the cook himself was expected to act as butcher when the hour of doom arrived. Calves too were the objects of great care; while sheep seem to have been regarded rather as valuable on account of their wool than in their capacity of animated mutton. Fish was in high demand. The nets of the busy boatmen were perpetually sweeping the violet depths of the sun-kissed Campanian sea. It was work that was well paid; for the market of Rome was one that it was hard to glut, and there were appreciative buyers ever on the watch for a rarity. A *very* big fish, as Juvenal tells us, a wise piscator would make haste to offer as a tribute on the threshold of Cæsar's kitchen; and if loyalty warred with covetousness, some zealous tax-gatherer was not unlikely to claim the scaly monster as a fugitive from the imperial *vivaria*; but all minor captures were sure to prove profitable to the men of hook and seine.

The Romans, however, scorned to trust wholly to the resources of Italian fields and waters for the replenishing of their thousand saucepans and the loading of their legion spits. Their supplies were drawn from north and south alike, and their foragers were stopped by no difficulties of time and distance. The sturgeon reached them from the frozen north, and the luscious figs of Carthage from the

south. In every nook of the provinces there was hardly a rustic who found anything worth the finding, perhaps truffles, possibly shell-fish, very likely the wild boar of the Umbrian uplands, who did not cry out to his comrade savages, 'Where is the quæstor? Where is the intendant or the freedman of my lord the procurator? This must go to our masters at Rome.' And to Rome went all that was best and most delicate in every conquered district: from Armenia to Beveland, from Portugal to Chersonese, Rome really and literally did 'eat up' the vassal countries, wringing from them whatever might fill her Brobdingnag larder at home. Corn and wine, oil and beans, poured fast into the port of Ostium, for Rome must be fed, let who would fast; and even before the emperors arose to deal doles of food to the poor and turbulent citizens of the plebs, the city had begun to demand from its rulers bread and games. The upper ten thousand of the all-conquering nation asked for no rations. Roman senators, Roman patricians, knights who owed their fortunes to usury or to a lucky chance in squeezing Cilicia or Marseilles, were willing to pay for the indulgence of their expensive whims. For them it was that Europe and Asia were ransacked to find the materials for a single feast. A Roman dinner was in some respects stereotyped. Like our own, it had its appropriate commencement and termination. It began with an egg, as we consider soup the inevitable preliminary. Apples ended the repast. Pineapples perched in an épergne more or less splendid, and perhaps wreathed with a supplementary garland of pale grapes, end it in our times. But there is room for much variety between the traditionary turtle and the enforced dessert.

Much of variety there was. The other day, when Paris was besieged, and strange dainties were dressed by skilful hands for those who still could pay, what bulky shades may have flitted past the plate-glass windows of Chevet and Véfour, of the Café Anglais and of the Maison Dorée! Can we not fancy Vitellius knitting his heavy brows at the notion of a fresh sauce, and Apicius smirking over the prospect of a new flavour? There would be Heliogabalus, priest of the sun before he was emperor of the Romans, eager in the pursuit of the gastronomy in which he had wasted the ransom of a Cæsar. Horace would have hovered near, mentally arranging the neat couplets that should embalm alike the queer food and the questionable partakers. Rats have been eaten of old time. Spanish and Jewish cities, hemmed in by the legionaries, have been reduced to singular straits. But never, beyond a doubt, did the famished folks inside make their dinner of rats *sautés à la Madère*. How could they? There was no Madeira. Neither the island nor the wine had as yet, according to the poet, 'trembled to a kiss.' There was not even, before Columbus and America, the pimento, without which a cat, according to high authority, is uneatable.

Whatever was strange, or odd, or expensive, or far-fetched, the Romans desired to eat; and never were people, considering the difficulty of transport, so well served. Not only had they no steamboats, no express train rushing under a high pressure of throbbing valve and beating piston along leagues of iron way, but even a decent turnpike road was denied them. Those long straight military routes of theirs, up hill, down dale, pointing inflexibly towards the goal, must have been ill-metalled and not too smooth. The post service was for Cæsar and his ministers and led captains, and for them alone. The general public found scanty facilities in those times; yet they not only travelled, but actually kept up an incessant parcel-traffic between Tay and Tiber, between Rome and Rennes. The immense demands of Rome, the presence of such a body of paymasters, possessing four-fifths of such capital as existed in the then known world, overcame the awkwardness of sending the cream of what the provinces had to send to the palaces of the Aventine and the fair villas of Baïæ.

Eating was a science, purveying was as the careful labour of learned professors. A new dish might be likened to a new star, and certainly made more stir in aristocratic circles in Rome than the discovery of the Georgium Sidus could possibly have done. 'Have you dined with Apicius lately? No. Then hang yourself, Caius, or get an invitation. Those patties of his, beccaficoes' tongues mixed with the tuneful tongues of nightingales, would arouse the dead to life. Hercules be with us! what a Goth you are, my Caius! Yet surely your grand relations of the Clodii would get you asked to the banquet of the Nones of April?'

Romans had in them something of Robinson Crusoe, and could enjoy a solitary meal. The famous phrase, 'Lucullus dines with Lucullus,' by no means implied that the prince of classic dinner-givers found his invitations slighted, or that guests were scarce. But eating was a solemn affair; conversation was apt to distract the mind from its due appreciation of rare flavours and delicate aftertastes. And then who so worthy to relish the good things bought from foreign purveyors at prices often surpassing the mere weight of the commodity in gold—the sharks' fins from the Atlantic Ocean, the ambergris from the same mystic part of the world, beyond the Giant's Pillars of Gades, beyond the black mass of Mount Atlas, the porpoise packed in snow, and sent by special courier from the bleak shores of the Batavian sea, the yellow partridges netted beside the Jordan, the pea-chick which the swarthy dealer warranted as having come alive in its coop from the untrodden lands whence Pyrrhus had drawn his elephants—as the lord and purchaser of so many expensive items in this sumptuous bill of fare? Who knew as did Lucullus the true merits of the succulent oyster from Britain, of the fat bears' paws brought in by savage hunters from beyond the Golden Chersonese of

the Crimea, of the porcupine trapped in Calabria, or of the tortoise of Tripoli, and the plump mouflon from Corsican mountains?

The majority of Amphitryons, of course, were not unsocial. It was very well for a born epicure like Lucullus to sit alone at his feast, like little Jack Horner in the nursery ballad, and in leisurely fashion to pick the plums of pleasure out of the pie of selfishness; but there was too much of ostentation and of display in the life of a rich Roman to permit of the exclusion of friends and parasites from the dinner-table. Daily, in a thousand villas and palaces, Dives fared magnificently in the centre of a swarm of rose-crowned revelers. Every dish was critically discussed, every extraordinary dainty from abroad was bragged about and vaunted to the skies; there was honorary mention for the ingenious discoverer of a new sauce, song, and music; and the old Falernian of the tall wine-pitchers beguiled the delay between the successive courses. The artificial appetite of an accomplished Roman was not to be appeased by simple eating; and the 'second hunger,' the invention of which was ascribed to Nero's boon companions, was as well understood in polite Rome as the means of procuring it were indulgently regarded.

The splendid inconsistent Middle Ages, with their strange mingling of frugality and lavishness, of stern asceticism and of riotous profusion, did little to advance the science of gastronomy. There were festivals, no doubt, on the occasion of some royal wedding or victorious peace, when the very gutters of the streets ran red with grape-juice, when the city fountains spouted forth crimson showers of Bordeaux wine, and when oxen were roasted whole in the marketplace. There were banquets surpassing in scenic effect anything which even pagan Rome—then lying dead, a despoiled and forgotten queen, with dust on her purple, and with her golden crown tarnished and dimmed—had ever beheld. How rich and fanciful the devices of the mediæval pastrycook, of the painstaking kitchener, of the colour-loving epoch that intervenes between the first crusade and the revival of learning! That prodigious paste that simulates a fortress, how craftily have been moulded its turrets and its battlements, the crenelated walls, the flags that flutter from the keep tower, the drawbridge, the moat, the barbican!—all true to fact, and all of mere pie-crust, bedecked with variously-tinted sugar, bought from the miscreant Saracen, through the help of Genoese traffickers. That other monstrous pie, who knows whether a live dwarf may not lie concealed within its recesses, like Sinon's Greeks within the wooden horse of Troy, ready, when the top crust shall be lifted, to squeak forth a merry roundel and drink a health to the king's grace? And the peacock—what a bird it is! how gorgeous it looks with its glorious train spread out like a many-coloured fan, and its crested head uplifted as if in pride! It was Brother John from the convent, you tell me, that overlaid the legs of the princely bird with all that

a gold which makes them glitter in the sun, down to the very w-tips, like the actual sunbeams themselves. The good monk has done his work marvellous well. Presently the knights will come forward, one by one, each with his good sword drawn, to swear in public, before heaven, and the ladies, and the peacock, as the quaint mulla runs, to quit themselves well in the new expedition that is set on foot against the infidel.

But a banquet of the Middle Ages appealed rather to the eye than it would have done to a cultivated taste. As far as birds and beasts went, our ancestors were omnivorous, setting a high value on the swan, the heron, the crane, and the cormorant, and having no abhorrence to the whale, the porpoise, and other cetaceous creatures, which we now abandon to the Esquimaux. Their brawn, their roasted geese, and other preserved luxuries, are lightly esteemed by their degenerate descendants; while even the glorified peacock, the reigning ornament of the whole dinner, was probably as tough as his stringy flesh had been cleverly counterfeited in white leather. It was perhaps well for the chief actors in these feasts of chivalry that their magnificent merry-makings were but occasional.

England, on account of her extensive trade by sea, not so much allied with distant countries as with the Hanse towns and Venice and the Netherlands, had one temptation to excess from which the lands and peoples of the Continent were exempt. She suffered under a plethora of spices. A student of old rolls which commemorate the feasts of City guilds and the entertainments of Lord Mayors, stands aghast at the fearful catalogue of cinnamon and cloves, of nutmeg and mace, and ginger and saffron, with which the meal was seasoned. The cooks of the Plantagenet period had what is professionally styled a heavy hand. Not content with adding a sly pinch, or moderate sprinkling, of the odoriferous products of Ceylon and Java, they seemed to believe that to have too much of a good thing was impossible, and so flung in the Eastern condiments by pounds. Saffron in particular, now almost entirely disused, was formerly employed in wild profusion, half the dishes on the board being coloured a golden yellow by the aid of this substance. It is not wonderful if deep drinking was customary, for the mouths of the guests must have been ablaze with the heat of the fiery and thirst-provoking drinks that were set before them.

With the Renaissance there came in, along with a revived love of classic verse and classic art, some desire for a different mode of living. The ancients, it was known, had been as profound on the subject of hashes as of hexameters, and had flavoured a pie with as much skill as they planned a portico. And in that branch of the cultivated arts France took the lead. The modern Italians, more learned probably than their lively rivals on the other side of the Alps, were instinctively too thrifty to emulate the prandial extrava-

gance of their heathen precursors. But the French took very kindly to the toils of spit and pipkin; and before long the reputation of their cooks stood highest in Europe. A few old Roman recipes were doubtless disinterred from the dusty shelves of mouldering libraries. The wealthier monasteries could supply a good deal of traditionary information as to the mysteries of the kitchen, since there had always been abbots who saw no harm in nice eating; and the perfervid fancy of the Gaul speedily struck out new paths for itself. The French cook was vainer than his compeers elsewhere; but it must be owned that he did much to justify his good opinion of his merits. He was ready, if need be, to die for his professional repnte. Vatel, falling on his own sword because the fish had not arrived in time for the dinner of the King of France, deserves to rank with those Japanese enthusiasts who salve their wounded honour by the Happy Despatch. One of the ornaments of Louis XIII.'s court owed his title of prince and his fortune to the fact that his grandfather had been master-cook to Henry III. Ude wrote as earnestly about the principles of cookery as Descartes of those of metaphysics.

French cooks, always a sensitive and irascible race, have seldom got on very long with their English employers. Even high salaries have not proved tempting enough to reconcile these alchemists of the kitchen to a climate which chilled their spirits, and to what they considered as insular indifference to the canons of taste. To pass a good dish unnoticed was a slight to the clever artist who had concentrated his genius upon it. To add salt to the soup, or pepper to the ragout, was a mortal affront. If Anatole were not so lucky as to be able to season to milord's fancy, let him go. He was desolated; but double wages should not bind him to a service in which his poor attempts to attain perfection were indifferently eyed. Cambacérès and Talleyrand found their 'officers of the mouth' as jealous and difficult to manage as if they had been marshals or diplomatists.

The influence which was formerly gained and preserved by dint of dinner-giving is now very much a thing of the past. To convert a *batterie de cuisine* into political artillery, and to win votes in the House by the arguments of old wine and fat venison, would be less easy now than it was to the ministers of the four Georges. The truth is, that club-life, in this as in other respects, has worked a social change, and has distinctly diminished the importance of the Amphitryon. When the choice lay between an ill-cooked and slovenly meal at a tavern, and a still worse repast in lodgings, the bachelor resident in London found an almost irresistible temptation in a good dinner. It is curious to mark how the memoir-writers of sixty years since prattle of the invitations they received, and how the good cheer and the distinguished company served, in their eyes, to throw a sort of golden nimbus around the founder of the feast. The Right Hon. Gentleman, or His Grace, was quite alive to the advantage of conci-

liating rising talent. The clever young man, whose heart throbbed exultant at the prospect of meeting blue ribbons and diamond coronets, and the famous people of whose names the meagre newspapers of the time were full, paid, after a fashion, for his dinner. He wrote a pamphlet in defence of his noble friend's public policy. If he had a happy knack for epigram, he lampooned, which was better still, the right hon. gentleman's principal opponent. His verses, inscribed in my lady's album, and shown in confidence to half the town before a month was out, were reckoned as very neat indeed. Perhaps he went into Parliament as member for the duke's pet seat of Little Pocketborough, and voted, if he did not think, as his patron would have had him vote. The old state of things has of course passed away. An invitation to even the most superb banquet is no longer the compliment it was. Young men about town are at any rate joint proprietors in a Pall-Mall palace. Their subscription enables them to avail themselves of the skill of a culinary artist who has perhaps, like Soyer or Gouffé, won his gastronomic spurs in royal kitchens, and whose salary is higher than the pay of Prussian generals. The club plate, the club cellar, the club servants, help a diner of slender means and refined habits to live within his income, and the contrast between wealthy magnificence and gilded poverty is by no means so striking as it was some generations past.

All things considered, it may be owned that the modern dinner-table, the table of to-day, approaches as nearly to the old Greek type as is compatible with the widely divergent character of the two civilisations. It certainly approaches the classic pattern in two valuable particulars—beauty and repose. There is much to please the eye. Instead of the heavy silver dish-covers behind which Theodore Hook and Sydney Smith began that file-firing of puns and paradoxes which was to last till tea-time, we now see bright blossoms and graceful green fronds of drooping fern, and rich ripe fruit obviously piled up rather to be looked at than for any grosser purpose, and pretty vases, and here and there a flash of crystal or a gleam of burnished metal visible through the flowers. Our personal preparations for the repast are not, it is true, quite up to the Athenian standard. We neither wreath our heads with blush-roses nor carry doves nestling among the folds of our robes. We content ourselves with chairs, and do not loll on ivory couches among silken pillows. Nobody fans us with rustling palm-leaves out of Syria, or with peacock feathers from the far Ind. No slaves swing censers simmering with the perfumes of Arabia. Music itself is not a very frequent addition to our joys, unless an organ-grinder catches sight of the illuminated windows, and refuses to 'move on.' We no more think of summoning our own flutists and lute-players to play soft airs behind a screen, than we should dream of engaging the services of the Ethiopian Serenaders, banjo, bones and all, from the public-house where

our coachmen drink their beer. The introduction of opera-dancers to perform in even the most elegant of ballets would now be voted an unpardonable anachronism. After all, we understand the art of quiet even better than did the ancients. Classic repose, especially in Rome, was quite compatible with making other people work very hard indeed for one's amusement.

But what an improvement is the modern Belgravian dinner over the coarser hospitality of our grandfathers! Surely it is better to see and sniff bright sweet flowers and cool green leaves, to say nothing of hot-house pineapples and blooming grape-clusters, than to employ the same senses with reference to steaming sirloins of beef and smoking saddles of mutton. Why should it ever have been thought necessary that a monstrous fish should lie wallowing on his flat dish at one end of the table, seeming to gasp with his widely-gaping mouth, while his round white eyes stared at the company in mute reproach? Why was it indispensable to balance this finny captive by a caldron of hot soup, euphemistically styled a tureen, and large enough to have contained a fatted calf in the form of mock turtle? And then the carving—the horrid sharpening of the knife with which some enthusiastic operators insisted on preluding the ceremony, the cutting and slicing and dismembering of blameless fowls, the dissection of a quarter of lamb, or the sacrificial observance of carving a haunch of venison—are we not well rid of these, and of the hideous anatomical talk to which they gave rise among some of the seniors of the party, the heroes of a hundred banquets? That there should ever have been a time when society tolerated conversation about sidebones and alderman's walks, and when a carver could be complimented on the neatness with which he made the transverse cut in performing on a saddle of mutton, or the unerring dexterity with which he articulated the joints of a wild duck, seems odd to neophytes born under a milder system. Then the drinking wine with this person and that, the nodding of heads and jerking of glasses that went on throughout the formidable length of the old-fashioned table; the delay between the courses, when everybody sat helpless around a desert of white damask; the exuberant philanthropy with which host and hostess conjured their friends to eat and drink more than was good for them! Who ever presses a guest to eat now? That *peine forte et dure* is over, let us hope in perpetuity, and the new mode of dining saves Mr. and Mrs. Amphitryon what must have been a most laborious task.

There are admirers of old ways still, who regret, or who say that they regret, the antique observances of a more demonstratively hospitable age. The obsolete has never been without a faithful few to sing its praises. The adoption of forks was a national blessing; but we may be sure that they were not introduced without a protest on the part of the Master Slenders and Justice Shallows of the day, in

favour of the good old English custom of eating with no sharp instrument to assist the fingers in their natural task. When horns gave place to drinking-glasses, when porcelain plates replaced the platter of hard wood and the trencher of greasy pewter, when dining-room floors were covered with Turkey carpets instead of with rushes, the groans of some elderly Britons must have saluted the change. To please every one is proverbially difficult, and we need not grudge the veterans of the mahogany the harmless luxury of grumbling at French 'kickshaws,' flower-decked tables, and *diners à la Russe*. But as regards the greatest happiness of the greatest number, there is little doubt but that our modern meal approaches as nearly possible to the ideal of what a dinner should be.

JOHN HARWOOD.

A JUNE MEMORY

BENEATH the hazel blossoms
Of that deep Devon lane,
I saw the sunset splendour
Gilding the wavy grain ;
The evening shadows deepen'd,
I waited, waited yet :
Do you, my love, remember ?
Can you, my own, forget ?

There, in the mellow gloaming,
When all the world was still,
I watch'd the great sun sinking
Behind the well-known hill.
Alone, my love—not lonely—
On that sweet eve in June,
I, waiting, watch'd the crescent
Of the faint and silver moon.

You came ; my heart had told me,
My love, that you were near,
Long ere your dear, dear footstep
Fell on my list'ning ear ;
Long ere those words were spoken—
Those words I hear them yet :
My love, do you remember ?
Can I, my own, forget ?

T. H. S. ESCOTT.



Murray, del.

W. A. Cranston, sc.

A JUNE MEMORY.

IMAGINARY LONDON

A delusive Directory

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

V. LITTLE SHAKO-STREET AND THE JUNIOR FROGBELT.

ARMS and the man—or rather the men—I sing; but pray don't be alarmed at this exordium, nor deem that I intend pulling out the Dryden-Virgil stop of the literary organ. I have nothing to say about 'haughty Juno's unrelenting hate;' the disastrous peregrinations of Æneas and 'the thin remains of ruined Troy;' the race of Alban Fathers, or 'the long glories of immortal Rome.'

Of arms, nevertheless, and of the warriors who wield them, I am now intent upon singing. The refrain to this paper will be the rub-a-dub of drums and the fanfare of trumpets; nor be surprised if you hear from time to time the squeak of the ear-piercing fife. This is a Vision of the Sword; of shakoes, helmets, shell-jackets, knapsacks, orderly-books, pipeclay, heel-ball, scarlet and gold lace, white plumes and crimson sashes. I intend to be intensely military. I have read up Cæsar (of course in Mr. Trollope's translation), Polybius, Xenophon, Count Philippe de Ségur, and Sir Garnett Wolseley's *Soldier's Pocket-Book*. Hart's *Army List* and the Queen's Regulations lie on my table while I write; and I have become a quarterly subscriber to the *Army and Navy Gazette*. Why don't they make Dr. W. H. Russell a Field Marshal? This article is dedicated to Mars Ultor; and, were I not somewhat nervous, I would write it on a drum-head, with a pen made out of a bayonet, dipped in blood-and-gunpowder for ink. *Bella! Horrida Bella!* My soul is roused to fury, and I snuff the battle from afar off. I come of a fighting family; and my great-grandfather, who was in the Bombardiers, covered himself with glory—'leastways,' as Mr. Solon Shingle would say, he ran away as fast as ever his legs would carry him at the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom.

Little Shako-street in the parish of St. James's, W., may be considered as the head-quarters of the officers of her Britannic Majesty's (Imaginary) army when they happen to be in London and on leave. The street is in close proximity to the principal military clubs, and to the establishments of the tradesmen and professional persons who minister to the wants of our gallant defenders; and I own that I am somewhat anxious to describe Little Shako-street out of hand, lest, in this ruthless age of disestablishment and disendowment, it should be swept away to make room

for a College of Serious Subalterns, or a Training Institution for Military Dry-nurses. Great changes, as you know, are impending in the organisation of her Britannic Majesty's army, and there is no knowing how soon the social aspect of the gentlemen bearing her commission may be radically altered—whether for the better or the worse, I will not attempt to conjecture. *Carpe diem*: Black Monday may be coming for Little Shako-street as well as for many other institutions.

The locality is not institutionally very old; dating indeed only from that period shortly after the passage of the first Reform Bill (we are obliged to number and ticket our reforms and our revolutions nowadays, so frequent are they of recurrence), when palatial clubs for every section of the affluent classes began to increase and multiply in London. When Captain Dobbin and his friend Captain Osborne were in town, just prior to the battle of Waterloo, it was at the old Slaughter's Coffee-house in St. Martin's-lane that they sojourned; and many a gallant British officer destined to find a grave on the plateau of Mont St. Jean ate his last good dinner and cracked his last bottle of Carbonnell or Whitefoord's port on English soil at that same coffee-house. In all that wonderful picture gallery of character which Thackeray has limned, is there one human type more crisp, more compact, more self-contained, than that of the obese waiter who welcomes Dobbin back after the long years he has spent in India, as though he had only been absent a fortnight; who bids the Boots put his old portmanteau into his old bedroom; and pulling out his dog's-eared memorandum-book, reminds him of the couple of pounds which Captain Osborne, Dobbin's friend, borrowed from him, the waiter, early in the month of June eighteen hundred and fifteen? When Dobbin returned, he was a lieutenant-colonel; but by the time he had become Sir William Dobbin, K.C.B., and had married the girl of his heart, the lachrymose Amelia, old Slaughter's was drifting into decadence, and military coffee-houses, not much superior to commercial inns in the accommodation they afforded, were beginning to be superseded by magnificent clubs, where indeed the members could not sleep, but where they found every other comfort and every luxury of life. The only link wanting in the chain was supplied by a bedroom at ten shillings a week in Little Shako-street or Pie-Poudre-place, hard by.

It may not be useless, and it may not be a digression, to hint in this place, and at this time, when the 'soldier officer' is in a transition state, which may end in complete metamorphosis from his former self, that the captain or the lieutenant who fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo was not socially that which he is at present, but what reformers are anxious that he should be no longer—a 'swell.' There was some dandyism in the Guards, and in or two of the cavalry regiments; but the average linesman

goon belonged essentially to the middle class. In this Victorian era he has come to belong *ex officio* to the uppermost grade. I think it was Lord Bacon who said that a lord in his cradle, naked, helpless, and slobbering, possessed more power and influence, and was surrounded by more deference, and reverence, than could be commanded by the wisdom and the virtue of eighty years. Similarly it may be said that a boy ensign of our time, from the mere fact of his wearing the Queen's scarlet, and of his having paid four hundred and fifty pounds for his commission, could claim in society a status equalling that of a born patrician, and far superior to that enjoyed by the 'professional' man properly so called. He would certainly look down upon a surgeon, a barrister, a clergyman, an author, or an artist of his own age. I will not say anything about journalists: everybody looks down upon *them*. The youngest clerk in a government office draws larger pay than the young subaltern; the clerk has only obtained his post after a long and trying examination; whereas the ensign has been gazetted after a few days' examining, and an investigation into his intellectual acquirements which a charity boy might laugh at; yet once with that blazing blanketing on his back, and a sword by his side, he has become a Brahmin. The strip of gold lace on his collar has been as the yellow streak of caste, to distinguish him from the Pariahs and the 'sweepers.' He may have been the son of a poor country parson, of a half-pay captain, or of an ambitious shopkeeper; but his ensigncy branded him at once as a 'swell.' With an income of not much more than seventy pounds a year, he must need keep a banking account forthwith and have his agent—Sir Ralph Rooster, Bart. (Rooster, Wooster, and Co., army agents, have their offices in Halberts-court, off Little Shako-street). With means barely sufficient to provide him with a cut of mutton and a pint of porter every day, the ensign has been expected to join an expensive regimental mess, to dine off plate, to order champagne on 'guest nights.' Then there was the band fund. Then there were subscriptions in aid of private theatricals; and, if he was a cornet of horse, his quota towards keeping up the regimental drag. Were he quartered in a large garrison town, there would be an officers' club, to which he would be bound to belong; and when he came to town on leave, must he not likewise have his club in St. James's, at which to lounge, and to dine, and to play his rubber or his game at billiards?—when he had any money, which was not always. The Queen's Regulations allotted, and continue to allot, a certain uniform to his rank; but that uniform, handsome and becoming as it was, he never wore save on guard, or on parade, or at mess, or on a field-day. Morally proud of the badge of his calling, an absurd etiquette made him physically ashamed of it. He was trained to brag about 'the cloth,' and he that cloth save when compelled by duty to assume it.

Etiquette—a wooden-headed corrupt custom rather—decreed that he should go about during three parts of his time in plain clothes, or 'mufti,' which the poor young gentleman could very ill afford. Not to wear mufti off duty was 'bad form.' It was equally bad in form to be studious or industrious, or to look upon the regiment otherwise than as another form of aristocratic club, of which the colonel was president, and the adjutant secretary, and where the rank and file officiated as waiters. In some regiments—but that was a very long time ago—not to be profligate, not to be drunken, not to be an ass, was to be in very bad form indeed. Now the subaltern of fifty or sixty years since was not, I maintain, a 'swell.' Excuse the slanginess of the term; but slang, to a vast extent, rules the army, as it rules the turf. He was still slightly more elevated perhaps in social dignity than the subaltern at the commencement of the last century, who was often the by-blow, or the gentleman's gentleman, or the convenient man of My Lord, and was contemptuously rewarded by him with 'a pair of colours.' Even in Goldsmith's time society would not have marvelled much had Mr. Jerningham, who handed the Duke his garters, been appointed to an ensigncy in a marching regiment. Ensign Plume and Captain Booth (who married that other Amelia) were assuredly no more 'swells' than Parson Adams or Parson Trulliber were clerical dignitaries. Look at the little ensign in Wilkie's picture of 'Reading the Will,' who dutifully waits on his parent, infuriated at being left out of her wealthy kinsman's testament. The cursory observer might mistake the ensign for a lacquey. No; he is an 'officer and a gentleman;' he is in full uniform, and he is carrying his mamma's pattens. Hogarth's officer in 'The Lady's last Stake' is in full regimentals. They say that General Wolfe was never seen in plain clothes. In the last century a soldier wore his uniform as habitually as a butcher wears his frock, or a policeman his tunic and helmet; but within the last two generations the social rank of the military profession seems to have been screwed up several pegs, like the late city of Chicago. Unfortunately the officer's pay has not kept pace with the enhancement of his prestige. The officer of bygone times could live on his pay: nor did he always spend half-a-crown out of sixpence a day. The 'swell' officer now menaced with metamorphosis can no more exist on the paltry remuneration allowed him by the state—and which is in reality only very meagre interest on the capital he has invested in the speculation called the British army—than a writer of poetic proclivities can exist by his contributions to the Poet's Corner of a provincial newspaper. It may be that this anomalous and artificial system of forcing 'swells,' and then denying the hot-house plant the necessary nourishment and caloric, has had something to do with the unhealthy efflorescence of a number of questionable professions, clinging like parasites to the tree of military

life, and which flourish exceedingly in Little Shako-street, Pie-Poudre-place, and the neighbourhood of the Junior Frogbelt.

But I must take breath; I have been arguing too vehemently. I must rest for a while at Puffin's. Puffin knows as well as any experienced veteran in the service that the maintenance of military 'sweldom' in the presence of exiguity of income is an exceedingly difficult feat; and Puffin, being an individual of wide views and expansively benevolent ideas, has endeavoured to revive within the shady recesses of Little Shako-street an establishment which for moderation in prices may recall the unostentatious days of old Slaughter's. Puffin was in early life a drummer in the 150th Foot; nay, I have even heard that he would, but for the obstinacy of his stature in growing outwards instead of upwards, have risen to the exalted rank of drum-major. The bushiness and blackness of his whiskers were, however, a virtual guarantee for his attaining eminence in whatsoever state of life he elected to devote himself to. So he kept the canteen at Gibraltar, and made a round sum in *pesos fuertes* both out of the soldiers of the garrison and the 'rock scorpions,' or natives. Subsequently he entered the service of Sir Barnabas Baracouta, Governor of the Rearward Islands. On the demise, through yellow fever supervening on excessive brandy pawnee, of that distinguished proconsul, Puffin returned to England, and after a brief appointment as messman to the 40th Uhlans, a crack cavalry corps, was elected steward of the Junior Frogbelt Club. His whiskers grew grayer, his waistcoat roomier, and his banker's books stouter, while superintending the comfort of the Junior Frogs; and ultimately retiring, he married (*en secondes nocces*; his first wife had been a Miss Flagon, who washed for the 150th Foot, and had an imprudent partiality for pineapple rum) Mrs. Hamper, the wealthy widow of Pie-Poudre-place, whose establishment for the supply of poultry, game, plovers' eggs, *pâté de foie gras*, tarts, truffles, champignons, and ortolans, is so well known to the stewards and the clerks of the kitchen of the fashionable clubs. Ah! they know how to live in the parish of St. James's, I can tell you.

Know how to live! There is wasted every day in this huge (Imaginary) city of mine—in wicked wanton superfluity, in guzzling and guttling, in tickling the palate with rare viands, half of which go into the hog-tub, or into the maws of ravenous waiters—a mass of victuals and drink which, properly bestowed, would make thousands of pinched and pining wretches as happy as they are now hungry and miserable. This is not a question of the pot of ointment which might have been sold for a hundred pence and given to the poor. The unguent does not go to the Master's feet. It is squandered on the meanest of mankind, upon belly-gods and sensualists, and upon their clients and parasites. Sell it for ten thousand pence, and no part thereof would become the portion of the poor. By the sale of

delicacies rich tradesmen only grow richer, and paunchy gluttons only more abdominous. 'The heart of man is a small thing,' says the patristic sage; 'it is not sufficient for a kite's dinner; yet the whole world is not sufficient for it.' The heart of the gourmand is in his stomach, and that stomach could engulf (happily it often fails in digesting) St. Paul's and St. Peter's, and St. Sophia at Stamboul, and the Rev. Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle to boot. The fatness of the earth is skimmed off to gratify the greed of the epicure. If domestic pets—darlings we coax and cherish—proved toothsome, he would devour them. He would fry the goldfish in the crystal globe, and roast the canary in the cage. He has no pity. If pigs can be made tender by whipping them to death, let the knotted cords scar their alabaster sides. If the livers of geese can be made fat by staking them before a brisk fire, and swelling them with water when they are athirst, pile on the coals and turn on the tap. If poultry can be made luscious by cooping them up in the dark and gorging them with grain, cram them till they burst. If the carp in the pond will grow more succulent by feeding on a slave's flesh, tie the servile person neck and heel, and heave him in. In with him! *Africanus moriatur; quis dolet Africanum?* Who mourns for a blackamoor?

Puffin never troubled his head with such reflections as the foregoing; nor perhaps should I have indulged in such a jeremiad but for the fact that I dined last week at the Junior Frogbelt, and that a *mayonnais de homard*, following on a *boudin à la Richelieu*, and washed down by some very particular Rudesheimer (Gebrüder Drexel, Frankfort-on-the-Maine), brought down the gout upon me fierce and aggressive, like an armed man. Puffin's gout, if ever he had that complaint, seemed to have escaped by the safety-valve of his whiskers, his ruby complexion, and his rich husky voice, which last always conveyed to you the impression of walnuts wrestling with old port, and of the port coming off victorious. It was very soon after Mrs. Hamper became Mrs. Puffin that the experienced caterer her husband purchased the lease and goodwill of old Flyblow's lodging-house and private hotel, at the corner of Little Shako-street and Pie-Poudre-place. Flyblow had been in the corn trade and failed. Mrs. Flyblow had a 'call' in some crack-brained dissenting congregation out Bermondsey way. She preached and testified, and at home could only get rid of her superabundant stock of excitement by thrashing her daughter with a strap, and imbibing a cup which failed to cheer, but which might be warranted to inebriate. Puffin got the lease and goodwill cheap; for Flyblow's business had long been in the shakiest condition; and Mr. and Mrs. Flyblow, after meditating for a while as to whom among their numerous body of creditors they should pay, arrived at last at the conclusion that to show any preference would be fraudulent; so not having sufficient to pay everybody, they paid nobody and went off with

their modest *peculium* to Glamorganshire, where Mrs. Flyblow had another call, and testified to the aborigines so loudly, that grace quite abounded in those parts.

Puffin has bought up four more leases and goodwills since he married the widow Hamper, and is now lord paramount of fully half one side of Little Shako-street. He goes round the corner into Pie-Poudre-place. He has knocked the parlours of four contiguous houses into one, to form a handsome coffee-room for his guests; for Puffin still keeps, as Flyblow kept before him, a private hotel. Only the hotel is one which, in its peculiar degree, can boast of as much publicity as Mivart's, or Long's, or the Clarendon. Puffin's is the young Slaughter's of the Victorian era. Colonel Dobbin does not stay there now, the place is a little too rackety for him, and he prefers quietude and the Tavistock; but he often calls at Puffin's, to give sage counsel to that dissipated George Osborne. Puffin's is known in every mess-room of every garrison in the United Kingdom, and in every colony where the Queen's morning drum proclaims by its sober tap that Britannia is still 'some pumpkins' among the powers of the earth, and has still some voice in the comity of nations.* It must be understood, however, that Puffin's is a subalterns' house, and is patronised mainly by young officers of the line. You might as well expect to find a sergeant of rural police dining at the Senior Benighted as a Guardsman at Puffin's. The ineffable ones of the Household Brigade may have heard of the place, just as they might hear of the Cook in Fleet-street, or a Peabody model lodging-house; but they would never dream of stopping in Little Shako-street. It would be 'bad form.' Artillery and Engineer officers too are not such frequent visitors to Puffin's as members of the non-scientific arms of the service. It is a juvenile house, a bachelors' house. How many pass-checks for the theatres or the Alhambra, how many books of the songs sung at Evans's, must the chambermaids have picked up 'the morning after' in the sleeping apartments of Puffin's Private Hotel! I wonder that the old gentleman does not keep a soda-water manufactory in his back kitchens, or a distillery in his garrets, for the demands for aerated beverages fortified by alcohol are incessant. Griff, of the 9th Cocktails, declares that Puffin's is the only place in London where you can get genuine 'soda-and-b.' 'Weal bwown bwandy, you know,' says Griff, 'and so'awa'r that's got so'a in it, and bwows the woof of your head off.' The private

* According to the Tory press, England, having bowed the knee to Russia and abandoned all the advantages she gained during the Crimean War, has become the scorn and byword of foreign nations. One Samuel Johnson said about the same kind of thing in a poem called *London*, written in the year 1738:

'Behold her cross triumphant o'er the main,
The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain,
Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,
Or English honour grew a standing jest.'

hotel is a banqueting-hall full of broiled bones, anchovy toast, kippered salmon, devilled kidneys, bashawed lobsters, scoloped oysters, claret and cider cup, Guinness's stout, and Bass and Allsopp's bitter beer. Fellows don't dine there much, they 'feed' at the Junior Frogbelt; but they drink a good deal at Puffin's, and they swallow the provocatives I have enumerated in the endeavour to get up an appetite for breakfast, after a hard night. Puffin has some of the finest regalias to be found out of the Havana (he is rather chary of letting *very* young ensigns have them, pleading that good tobacco is thrown away on parties whose beard hasn't come yet), and he is moreover sole depositary of a secret for concocting perhaps the most potent and invigorating restorative or 'pick-me-up' (to be taken after a *very* hard night) ever administered to nervous subalterns. It is understood that the recipe was bequeathed to him many years since, by the colonial governor whose loss he (and the country) had so much reason to deplore. Army doctors have analysed the mixture, which, if report speaks true, contains Bourbon whisky, gentian, sulphuric ether, spirits of ginger, morphia, sarsaparilla, spirits of nitre, camphor, peppermint, cinnamon, and a little hellebore; but there is likewise some occult ingredient (as in Cockle's pills) which puzzles the analysts, and which constitutes that secret which Puffin haughtily refuses to divulge. You shall see a young lieutenant, after one of the hard nights I speak of, perfectly flabby and flaccid, as though the backbone had been taken out of him, pale, dejected, and demoralised, and looking as though he were on the point of shedding tears, or of requesting to be allowed to go home to his mamma. Who but Puffin, and in a space of time vulgarly termed a 'jiffy,' is able to rescue him from this pitiable state of collapse! The beneficent enchanter emerges from the private laboratory to which he has retired to prepare his potion. He brings a tall glass in which some greenish liquid fizzes and foams. 'You put yourself outside that, sir,' he says to the customer in a state of collapse; 'don't make no bones about it, throw your head back and take in cargo.' The demoralised subaltern drinks, coughs, winks, sees fireworks, and is a new man; slaps Puffin on the back, and orders a mutton chop, 'and lots of muffins, you know,' for breakfast. They say that Lieutenant Swypeleigh (who habitually took more soda-and-b. than was good for him) felt so dreadfully 'cut' one morning, that he was hesitating between a walk to the Serpentine and suicide, and sending in his papers with a view to selling his commission and emigrating to the backwoods of the Far West, when, in the nick of time, Puffin came to his aid. He quaffed the magic cup; ate a rump-steak and a whole dishful of ham-and-eggs, with two rounds of toast; smoked a couple of Puffin's best regalias, jumped into a hansom, was driven to Sahara-gardens, Behemoth-gate; proposed to Miss Iguanodon (old Iguanodon's daughter; he was

deputy chairman of the Leviathan and East Antediluvian Railway, and she had seventy thousand pounds in her own right), and was accepted before the end of luncheon, a meal of which he partook with voracity, entirely owing to Puffin's 'pick-me-up.'

Every hansom cabman knows Puffin's, and knows too that he may make sure of a liberal fare for conveying passengers to and from that jocund private hotel. 'Vere to, sir?' asks cabby when he is hailed at Hyde-park-corner by a slim young gentleman with tawny moustaches. 'Little Shako—' begins the young gentleman. 'Right, capting,' interposes Jehu blithely. 'It's Puffin's; this little 'oss knows Puffin's as vell as he knows his own stable.' And away goes the gondolier of the streets, Puffinwards. The cabmen know the Senior Benighted, the Longswordsaddlebridle, the Sabretasche, the Sepoys, the Gray Musketeers, and the Junior Frogbelt as well as they do Puffin's. The above are all military clubs; and the Junior Frogbelt is the fastest of the group. The Senior Benighteds—fierce old white-whiskered veterans, or feeble tottering ancients, mainly, with a confirmed impression that the service is going to the deuce, and that the abolition of flogging and purchase will prove the ultimate nails in its coffin—do not approve of the Frogbelts. The Sepoys—an Indian club, much afflicted with liver complaint, and famous for their mulligatawny and their curried lobster (which is not so good as Puffin's bashaw, though)—absolutely loathe the Frogbelts, and call them a set of riotous, brandy-drinking, billiard-playing yahoos. Memorandum: much whist for guinea points is played at the Sepoys. The Guards simply ignore them, or inquire whether the Frogbelt isn't a place where they take in fellows from the militia. But the Junior Frogbelt Club holds its own, and pursues the even tenor of its way, all animadversions and all disparagements notwithstanding. Its list of members is not very fertile in Lords, and I am afraid that there are not many K.C.B.s on the committee; but the club is very full, the dinners and wines are very good, the cigars are unimpeachable, and the smoking-room is one of the jolliest in all clubland. To see the Frogbelts in all their glory, you should have Asmodeus' privilege, and removing the roof, peep into the saloons of the club on the morning and on the evening of the Derby, and on the first levee-day of the season. Stay, the eve of the great race is likewise a spectacle well worth witnessing; for then the annual Frogbelt's lottery is drawn, and numerous young Hopefuls, who have been dreaming for weeks of drawing the favourite—the first prize in the 'sweep' amounts to two or three hundred pounds—discover with dismay that the dip in the lucky bag has only given them a ticket inscribed with the name of Mr. Somebody's colt, which died last January, or Brother to Anonyma, which happened to be scratched the day before yesterday. Never mind, such mischances as these do not affect the flow of merriment

or the consumption of sodas-and-b.s. They are as jolly as Mr. Gray's Eton boys.

'Gay hope is theirs, by Fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast.
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer of vigour born;—'

Halte là! Does not Mr. Gray say something likewise in this pleasant ode of 'the ministers of human fate,' of 'black Misfortune's baleful train,' of the murderous band who lie in ambush to seize their youthful prey, and in hissing accents tell them they are men? See them lounging, drinking, smoking, chatting. See them on the Derby morning, the blue veils of their hats fluttering in the vernal breeze, the bouquets glowing in the button-holes of their silken overcoats. See the race-glasses neatly slung at their hips; mark their polished boots and natty gloves. Watch them climbing to the box-seat of the drag, vaulting into the wagonette, or even condescending to leap into the lowly but rapid hansom. *Vamos!* Away, and away, to the brow of the hill, to the Downs, the ring, and the paddock. Away to lobster salad and champagne; to stick-throwing and sweepstaking; to flirting with high-chignoned and more highly-painted beauty; to flinging dolls (and sometimes even bags of flour) at objectionable snobs. The gilded dreams of fancy are realised; the painted rainbow is permanent. Psha! it all fades away like the sickening stars at dread Medea's strain. The real reality comes on the Derby night, and ambushed whispers warn the gallant young roisterers that they are men indeed.

'The world's a hive,
From whence thou canst derive
No good but what thy soul's vexation brings:
But ease thou meet
Some petty, petty sweet,
Each drop is guarded by a thousand stings.'

Thus bitter old Quarles, of the 'Emblems.' Cornet Gosling won eleven and sixpence in a sweepstake, drawing the favourite, this morning; but he has lost three hundred and sixty pounds, by having previously backed the field against the favourite. Lieutenant Gander, who imagined that he 'stood on velvet,' finds himself sitting on thorns; and Captain Stagge, who thought to have 'skinned the lamb,' indulges in rueful thoughts now of being himself skinned on settling day. Tattersall's sits heavy on the hearts of the roisterers. Heavy footsteps as of those of a Statue resound through the vast saloon. A dreadful white figure appears in the smoking-room. It is the COMMENDATORE, and he has come to supper. Don Giovanni turns pale; and Leporello (the waiter) gets

under the table. The Commendatore will sup on the commissions of his young hosts, on the savings of the old country parsons and half-pay officers their fathers, on the jointures of their mothers and the portions of their sisters. For the Commendatore is the CREDITOR: the claimant of the debts alike of honour and of dishonour. What a pity it is that so many of these brave, generous, frank-hearted lads should possess betting-books, and that most of them should be desperately in debt to their tailors, or hopelessly immersed in the nets of the usurer!

Well, who is not in debt to somebody? Cræsus may have been occasionally 'short,' and blind Samson grinding in the Philistines' mills may have been somewhat consoled in his captivity by the thought that he could no longer be dunned for Dalilah's milliners' bills. There is a fair amount of sunshine all the year round in Little Shako-street and at the Junior Frogbelt, notwithstanding the cypress shade occasionally thrown over the place by the bill-discounter round the corner. And, moreover, not all the subalterns are impecunious. More than one wealthy military tailor or army-accountment maker in the neighbourhood has a son in her Majesty's land service; and few people suspect that the papa of dashing Captain Fitzmore of the Plungers is old Mr. Bilshan Mordecai, jeweller, picture-dealer, cigar-merchant, horse-dealer, and bill-discounter of Pie-Poudre-place. We boast a great deal of the aristocratic constitution of our army; and as I have shown, the exigences of 'form' demand that the military officer, be he an ensign or a field marshal, must be a 'swell.' In his case absolutely *c'est l'habit qui fait le moine*. But in reality, under the defunct purchase system the expenditure of four hundred and fifty pounds, and another hundred or so for the young man's outfit, was one of the cheapest of processes available for making a gentleman. The army was a vortex, a whirlpool sucking all in; and Nobody's Child, after spinning round and round for a time in that kindly Maelstrom, turned up in brilliant uniform or tasteful mufti, with his hair parted down the middle, with a lisp, a 'gentleman' from top to toe. There will be an end of this pleasant state of things, I suppose, shortly; and Little Shako-street is, perhaps, doomed. Puffin will accept a huge sum as compensation from the Metropolitan Board of Works, or the London School Board, or Spiers and Pond, or somebody else desirous of making an architect's fortune by running up a Tower of Babel for some public or commercial purpose, and retiring to some snug country retreat, write long letters to the *Times*, signed 'Centurion,' or 'A Light Bob,' or '*Quo fas et gloria ducunt*,' about the management of the army, concerning the victualling department, of which Puffin assuredly knows a great deal. They ought to have made him Chief of the Control Department, long ago. As for the subalterns of the future, I suppose they will all wear blue goggles,

and live principally on green tea and dried toast. They will ride in omnibuses, or travel second class by the Metropolitan District Railway; the hansom cabmen will no longer know their way to Little Shako-street; the steps of the Junior Frogbelt on the morning of the Derby will be as deserted as those of the Marquis of Tadmor's mansion (Wilderness House) in Piccadilly, and the pleasant fizzing of 'pick-me-ups' at Puffin's will be heard no more.

A FIJIAN NEWSPAPER

How many of the readers of this brief article—whether gentle or otherwise—know the situation of the Fiji Islands? It is a thousand pounds to a postage stamp—as one of the sporting correspondents would say—that not more than one in a hundred has any more definite knowledge of this group than the opinion that it is a long way off, and that the inhabitants are addicted to cold missionary and Evangelical sauce. To the many who do not know the situation of the group of which I am speaking, I cheerfully give the information that the Fiji Islands are situated north-east of Australia, in the Southern Pacific. Of the laws and constitution it is not necessary to say more than that the head of the government is a magnifico, rejoicing in the name of King Cakobau, who has recently shown considerable desire to be enrolled amongst the constitutional monarchs of the world.

My object in writing this short paper is to evolve some indications of the social life of the inhabitants from a perusal of an organ of public opinion printed in their midst. I have put as a question to a few friends not unacquainted with journalism, 'What do you think a Fiji newspaper would be like?' and the reply of each substantially was, 'I don't suppose there is such a thing as a newspaper in Fiji.' It may be as well, then, to inform those who are unacquainted with the fact, that two newspapers are published in Fiji. Some readers will probably anticipate that in an account of a journal printed in the group, every line would resemble the 'three snakes' tails and a couple of triangles,' which the hero of 'O'Callaghan on his Last Legs' described as the constituents of a medical prescription. Such, however, is not the case; for the information given is conveyed in the same language in which we in England read the news of the day—or more correctly of the day before—over our breakfast tables or elsewhere. It is only when one carefully examines the contents of a journal that he finds how much of history might be written from the perusal of one number of the publication. Irrespective of the information contained in the 'news' portion of it, the advertisements report or suggest a host of events. A requisition to a chief magistrate, for instance, may show that a great civil commotion is imminent, or that the public sympathy demands reform in some social or legislative abuse.

I have now before me a copy of the *Fiji Gazette and Central Polynesian*, published at Levuka, Ovalau, the most important island of the Fijian group. I propose to give a brief description of

this journal, with such observations on the social and political condition of the islands as its contents suggest. The form of the *Fiji Gazette*—which, it may be necessary to state, is printed in English—prepossesses the intending reader. It consists of four pages of six columns each, printed in bold type, on paper slightly toned. The first thing that arrests the attention of the English reader in these days of penny and halfpenny papers, is the announcement in the date line that each number of the *Gazette* costs sixpence. The advertisements, which occupy the first page, relate principally to shipping; but several announcements show, that even in Polynesia the love of finery is as strong as in these northern islands, and that the ladies in the group will not suffer themselves to be in the condition which the author of 'Nothing to wear' describes as

'A sad case;

Complete destitution—of Brussels point-lace.'

As suggestive of the state of society in Fiji, we find in juxtaposition with advertisements of haberdashery and jewelry, notices of the arrival of beads and tomahawks. Intimations that actors and actresses are required show that the drama is cultivated more or less; from the notices of the proposed sale of superior grand pianos, we may assume that Terpsichore is sometimes worshipped in the Southern Pacific. That a circulating library has been established is only what might be expected in a place where the opportunities of amusement, in a European sense, must be almost necessarily infrequent. The numerous lists of places where luxuries may be obtained are indications that the residents amply attend to their creature comforts; this will not constitute a source of wonder to any one who considers that few means of enjoyment are provided except the dinner-table. In countries nearer home the effect of a similar absence of intellectual recreation has been frequently observed; to this, in a great degree, may be attributed the six-bottle era of English society, when a country gentleman thought he had not done honour to his host until he had swallowed half-a-dozen bottles of his port. What else, he argued, was to be done after he had finished the hunting and shooting of the day? Some of the business announcements are modelled on the home plan. A retailer, for instance, recommends his wares in the following versés, which are worthy the Muse of any of 'our own poets' engaged in tuning their lyres for the advancement of particular branches of industry:

'O, have you seen the 'Little Shop'
That started on the beach, sirs,
With such a stock of articles
That are within your reach, sirs?
There's cheap tobacco for the pipe,
And matches, wax and wood uns,
And fine cigars both mild and strong,
And they're considered "

To enumerate the articles
 That are upon the shelf, sirs,
 'Twould take too long; so come at once,
Sara sara for yourselves, sirs.
 And bring the money in your purse;
 For I would have it said, sirs,
 That "Tick," poor man, has hopp'd the twig—
 He numbers 'mong the dead, sirs.'

That the lesson taught by the American war—that the world must not depend on that continent solely for a supply of cotton—has not been forgotten in Polynesia, may be gathered from the frequent notices of machines for preparing the material being offered for sale. 'A consignment of Snider carbines and rifles just received,' is rather suggestive that effective means of defence against danger are still required by the European inhabitants; and the necessity of a supply may be learned from the particulars given in the second page of the paper before me of certain rather alarming occurrences.

A case of mob law, instances of which are sometimes given in Fiji, is thus described: 'A prisoner having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment, a number of persons—the police being absent on duty at the court—entered, broke open the cell in which the prisoner was confined, and bore him away in triumph to the hospitable cigar saloon of Messrs. ——. Thence he was taken to the billiard saloon at —'s Hotel, where a jury was empannelled to try him. A justice and counsel having been appointed, the unwashed in numbers formed a brilliant audience in the saloon and about the bar. This trial, after considerable delay, with great good-humour and hilarity, was got through, highly to the delectation of all the cash customers [no Tick now], as well as others who had no change in their pockets and had left none at home, but who floated about the bar, firing running comments upon the exceeding propriety, the great gravity, and admirable consistency of the proceedings. This ended in the acquittal of the prisoner, who, the admired of all admirers, complacently adjourned to the bar, and was treated to several modest quenchers.'

The effect of these and similar proceedings, it appears, was that special constables were sworn in—the danger of the crisis being represented by *ten rounds of ammunition for each man*.

The 'departed spirits of the mighty dead' who directed the destinies of those enlightened organs of thought known as the *Gazette* and the *Independent* of Eatanswill, seem to prompt the journalistic utterances of some of the editors in the Antipodes. The editor of the paper now before me—the *Fiji Gazette*—has entered into a rhetorical encounter with 'the nominal [this is 'sarkasum,' as Artemus Ward would say] proprietor of the *Courier*, a *weakly* journal of enormous influence at Scone, 470 miles from Sydney, *having ninety-seven subscribers*.' Mr. M—— of the *Gazette* reminds Mr. T—— of the *Courier* that when the latter gentleman was in Fiji, 'respect

for the scurrilous abuse he heaped upon her Majesty's Consul procured for him the charitable donations of his friends to carry him to Sydney.' Mr. T—— had previously stated that Mr. M——, whilst in Sydney, 'edited the *Police News*, the most obscene, libellous, scurrilous, prurient paper ever printed out of Holywell-street; he knows he was tried twice for stabbing in Tasmania; he knows Fiji is indebted for his presence to the 100*l.* damages obtained from Mr. Parkes for accusing him of the most heinous offence against morality imaginable; he has been caned, and whipped, and kicked for scurrility times out of number; he knows he was kicked publicly at the Levuka Hotel for insulting a gentleman. Then why don't Burt cut the fellow dead?' ('Burt' happens to be the Chief Secretary.) 'We see by the *Fiji Times*,' continues Mr. T——, 'that some one threw a clod at the fellow M——, and are glad that one man, at least, has the decency to protest in a proper manner against his sticking his disreputable nasal organ in the political affairs of Fiji.' Appended to this is a note: '*Fiji Gazette*, please copy.' This Mr. M—— does, and thanks Mr. T—— for this true specimen of his quality, and presents it with pleasure to all Mr. T——'s old friends in Levuka.

The sum of these inferences may be thus succinctly stated in the words of a letter received from Australia: 'Levuka is without law, yet comparing favourably on the whole as to honesty and good order with many towns which are well provided both with magistrates and police; a place where much liquor is consumed, yet which has, in other respects, a peculiarly moral character—the great social evil of other lands being absolutely unknown; a place where there is at times, and among certain classes, a good deal of rowdyism, yet having within and around it the elements of a high-toned society.'

T. F. O'DONNELL.



E. Wagner, del.

F. Kemple

LOVE'S CATAWAY.

LOVE'S CASTAWAY

SEE you yon fort, with semilunar towers -
 Fenced, whereon showers
Of sobbing sea-water fall night and day ?
There gossips, seated by their winter fire,
 Long evenings tire
With an old true story of Love's Castaway.

Love's castaway ! For none ! no pity had Love,
 Her feet to move
From those false sinking sands, in that far time.
Love's fever, which no herbs on earth may heal,
 No art conceal,
Rich matter makes me for my random rhyme.

In very sooth she was a pleasant field,
 Fertile to yield
All joys, a garden full of budding flowers ;
He knew not—and how happier not to know !—
 What fruit would grow,
What harvest whiten for him of hapless hours.

'Meet me to-night, this once, if never more,
 By the sea-shore.'
Love made her to his whisper'd words incline.
He left, with other longings undenied,
 Her soft warm side,
Love-drunken, like the thrush that leaves the vine.

Sweet night and sad, and yet more sad than sweet ;
 She hears the beat
Of waves, but warning voices cannot hear ;
Dark night veils from her eyes wild warning hands
 And those false sands,
But never dark night yet made lovers fear.

Ah ! never yet ; and so she seeks her grave ;
 The wet winds rave
Around her, and the ghostly sea-gull cries ;
The thirsty sand her small smooth body drinks ;
 Slowly she sinks,
A sight too sad for any mortal eyes !

LOVE'S CASTAWAY

The long woven hair, to tie which was love's meed,
The salt seaweed
Ties, and the tender hands; the coral tongue
Now never more—woe worth the while!—may teach
Love's tones, in speech
Sweet, sweeter far than any sweetness sung.

Ah, loved round mouth, ripe loving lips and red!
Waste sands were fed,
With all your wealth were fed waste barren sands;
What word was last born of your balmy breath?
Whose name, ere death
Loosed from dear life faint hold of lingering hands?

Always thy face shines with full share of tears,
Thou Love! and fears
Of shoals beset us in thy sunny sea,
Shall other suns, say, ever on thee smile,
In some blest isle,
Where is no sorrow and tears may never be?

L'ENVOI.

My lady, on your lap a little while,
Beneath your smile
And on your soft lap let my ballad bide;
It may be, well it may be, there are sands,
Which plighted hands
Part, never wash'd by wave of whelming tide.

JAMES MEW.

TRANSATLANTIC SPORTS AND SPORTING MATTERS

A Chapter on Uncle Sam's Diversions

MR. JOSH BILLINGS says that 'most people decline to learn except by their own experience, and,' he goes on to observe, with a pardonable egotism, 'I guess they're more 'n half right, for I don't suppose a man would get a correct idea of molasses candy merely by letting another feller taste it for him.' But perhaps the readers of *Belgravia* may be neither so critical in their philosophy as that distinguished commentator, nor averse to having at second-hand some notion, whether correct or not, as to what a trotting match is like, with all its attendant incidents and peculiarities, and of the particular pastimes generally practised *pour passer le temps* on 't'other side of Jordan.'

Without aspiring to the proud position of a 'prophet,' or presuming to any such knowledge of sporting matters as is evinced by those who ring all the idiomatic changes known in the racing vocabulary about 'weights for age,' 'putting on the pot,' or 'skinning the lamb,' one may be allowed to hazard the opinion that the Americans, as a rule, show far greater prescience and aptitude in the study of the quine race than ourselves, and exhibit their natural keensightedness in this respect in a more business-like and practical manner than is to be seen practised on the English turf. They do not regard a horse simply in the light of a sort of philosopher's stone or the production of gold, as the alchemists of old looked on their over-eggs specific; nor do they spend large sums on the breeding and training of the animal merely for the sake of his winning one great race, and then reaching the *ultima Thule* of his career. On the contrary, horses throughout the States are cultivated and their breed improved—especially in Virginia and Lexington in Kentucky, where there are large training establishments which eclipse even John 'Es' Scott's for their size—more for the purpose of their after usefulness than for a mere spasm-like term of speed, although the latter excellent quality is not by any means neglected.

Owing to this reason, an animal, should he not quite come up to the standard of trotting merit, and be able to do his mile in 2.40,' is still available as a fair roadster or carriage horse; whereas in England a broken-down racer is hardly fit for a cab-hack. It is true that American horses do not display those fine blood points which rouse the admiration of bookmakers and touters in the paddock; but they are splendidly developed, nevertheless, and can show chests and legs of their own, and mighty flanks, that rival those of

the best stonefencer from Galway: no stork-like stilts there, but sound sturdy understandings, that stand in good stead on the road, and powers of wind and limb that enable them to last longer than would the proudest descendant of the fleetest Derby winner ever known. I have seen a pair of western horses trot their twenty miles within the hour, and this was not an exceptional case. It would be a puzzle to find such over here. So long as speed is regarded as the one essential necessary, to the exclusion of all other points and properties, and the foolish, not to say cruel, practice of training and running yearlings and two-year-olds prevails with us, it is utter folly for the advocates of the turf—with all due deference for the weight of Admiral Rous's opinion—to talk of its 'improving the breed of horses,' as Charles the Second intended when he inaugurated the first Smithfield races, and the noble importer of the celebrated 'Arab' hoped. The English racer of the present day stands to the American trotting horse somewhat in a similar proportionate relation as would a man who had studied only Latin and Greek appear by the side of one who has received a practical modern education; the one may have high attainments, but take him out of his special line, and he would be like a fish out of water; while the other is fit for any profession or calling, and could earn his bread where the classic, however great his acquisition of ancient lore, would starve. Certainly, equinely speaking, Jonathan is entitled to the *pas* of us in this respect; for a good trotter can be utilised in more ways than one, apart from any reference to hippophagy, while the Ascot or St. Leger favourite is, generally speaking, afterwards capable of no description of useful work, 'bar one,' as sporting men express it in their peculiar parlance. But *revenons à nos moutons*, for our trotting match is a long time under weigh.

The Fashion course on Long Island, where the Isthmian games of the Manhattanese are usually celebrated, is a pleasant drive from New York across the East Hudson river, being not more than six or seven miles out. In appearance it is not unlike Lord's cricket ground, only a trifle larger; and the track which encircles it is hedged in on the turf side by a shrubbery of growing trees, and on the exterior by posts and rails. The course is exactly one mile round, subdivided by 'quarter poles,' equally placed, where the times of the various heats are taken; while the ground is kept in good running condition, so as not to injure the horses' heels, as the 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer on the 'ard 'igh road' did those of Leech's cockney groom. In fact, it closely resembles Rotten Row in its general style, although a grand-stand with a judge's chair placed opposite give it a more racing look; and besides, beauty and rank do not often grace the place with their presence. Despite of these attractions, the Fashion course is a very agreeable spot to visit in summer, when the dust and wind are not too troublesome nor the

mosquitoes very numerous, as they frequently are in the months of July and August, when the principal trotting matches of the season mostly come off. These annoying little insect pests abound in Long Island, but I must acknowledge they are not so large as they are along the shores of New Jersey, where they are currently reported to grow to such a size that, instead of making a buzzing noise with their miniature trumpets, as they do in other places, they actually *bark*. If the story be true—and I do not vouch for it personally—these mosquitoes must be on a par with the gigantic spiders which Professor Agassiz met with on the banks of the Amazon river in his explorations of South America, and which were to be seen chained up at the doors of the natives' cabins, being used as house-dogs!

All races are decided by mile heats, five being the usual *quantum*, although, in case of a tie between any two of the competitors, they continue on any extra number of times round the course, until one is able to be at length declared the winner; while, should a horse win the three first heats 'right off the reel,' as they say, of course it is merely an optional matter his running in the rest, and not obligatory. I have seen as many as nine heats run in a trotting trial between four animals. At the termination of each mile, a quarter of an hour's grace is allowed, when the horses' mouths are sponged out, and any trifling alterations made in the harness, and so on, that may be allowed, and the driver 'liquors up;' but the clerk of the course keeps a strict watch that no weights are altered or any unfair advantage taken in the interim. When the warning-bell rings before the start, the aspirants for trotting honours take their places some distance down the course, more than two or three hundred yards below the cordon in front of the judge's stand from whence they are dispatched, so as to get up sufficient steam before beginning, and they approach this line at full speed. Should they be pretty even, the judge gives the signal 'off;' but as one or two of the horses break into a canter through the excitement of the moment, a good many false starts are frequently made, which point is easily comprehended by the knowing ones, who thus weary out a high-spirited competitor. The time of the heat is taken by a stop-watch at the quarter poles, as observed before, at the half miles, and at the finish in front of the judge's box, and exhibited on a chalked blackboard shortly afterwards—just in the same way that mathematical masters demonstrate Euclid's problems at school; the operation being repeated at the end of each round until the contest is decided, when the unflinching fiat of the umpire is given, the dollars 'shelled out,' and all is over.

The American trotting-wagons have of late been so frequently used in this country that they hardly call for any special description. Should, however, the reader not have chanced to see one, let him

imagine an axletree, two bicycle wheels, a pair of shafts, and a camp-stool loosely strung together, and he will have a tolerably correct idea of what the vehicle appropriately denominated a 'spider,' is like. The drivers use very strong short reins, each end of which is woven into a stout handle, to insure a firm grasp being taken, as the horses require good pulling in when going, or they would quickly 'break' and spoil the match. Indeed all men in tooling a team in the States hold their reins very differently from us, as, instead of keeping them in the left hand between the second and little fingers, in the usually accepted mode, they use both hands, holding a rein in each. I have seldom, if ever, seen a whip used except by the drivers of the horse cars, consequently the right hand is not required to be kept free for this purpose—so much the better for the poor animals: it would be as well if the practice were also the exception and not the rule, as we see, in the London streets.

The different drivers, however, make up for the absence of the lash by a corresponding amount of yelling, shouting, and oburgation, both loud and deep, as they urge on their horses round the track, which must be heard to be fairly appreciated. I suppose it is done to 'kinder encourage 'em,' like Artemus Ward's application of the ginger to his horse's tail when stuck in a mud swamp while on his way to visit the Shakers; but, certainly, the cries you hear at an exciting finish rival the Comanches on a war path, and suggest Pandemonium broken loose. The strange part of it is, too, that the competitors have it all to themselves; for the spectators are very quiet as a rule, keeping their enthusiasm carefully concealed, and being utterly unlike any similar assemblage on an English race-course. There is no regular betting-list ever opened with odds offered against the horses, but a different plan of speculation is adopted, called 'selling pools.' The best quadruped's chances are put up to auction and sold for a certain number of dollars, which are deposited with the appointed holder of the stakes, who supplies the post of our 'bookmaker;' then the next animal's chances are put up also, and sold for a lesser sum; and so on with as many as are engaged. The winner then takes the whole of the 'pools' deposited, less a small percentage, which recoups the holder for his trouble. Thus, supposing the favourite sells for a hundred dollars, and another horse for fifty, while a third goes for ten,—should the latter win, the investor will obtain a hundred and fifty dollars, less commission, for his stake of ten, besides receiving his wager back. The best trotting match I ever saw was that of Dexter, the great American crack, along with another celebrated mare called Lady Thorne, against time, for a purse of a thousand dollars, I believe. They trotted three mile heats, the mare running beside Dexter, who was ridden under saddle to encourage him on, the same as we see the trainer of a ped 'panying his 'novice'

in a spin; and the times of the heats were respectively two minutes and eighteen seconds, 2' 17.5" and 2' 15.5", the latter being the fastest trotting time on record, and very nearly equal to racing, although the pace was never broken by a canter. Dexter has since been presented by his proprietor, Robert Bonner, of the *New York Ledger*, to General Grant, although he refused six thousand dollars for him on the ground after his celebrated match. Trotting horses are said to be the only 'weakness' of the present President of the United States, with the exception of cigars, of which he is inordinately fond, never being seen without a specimen in his mouth—like the 'eternal cigarette' of the ex-emperor of the French. Luckily for the President, his 'particular wanity' is so well known that he is kept constantly supplied gratuitously by his fond admirers throughout 'the Union,' which he butchered for!

The Fashion course, which I have omitted to say has extensive training stables attached, and a circular wooden shed running round all the paling that encircles it, for visitors to 'hitch up' their wagons in, belongs to Hiram Woodruffe, one of the 'horsiest' men in America, who makes a very pretty thing in dollars out of it every year. Besides this track, there is also another on Long Island, and not very far off either; but the best place to see trotting is in Central Park during the months of May and June, when the weather is fine, and before people begin to leave the city for their various country retreats. Then, a regular 'ring' of gay equipages and fine horses is to be seen as in Hyde Park in the height of the season; but, instead of people going to see the dresses and faces of the leaders of the *beau monde*, they visit Harlem Line, as the drive is called, to look at the animals, which are much better known to reputation than their drivers. Occasionally some prominent city man, such as Ben Wood, the chief wire-puller of Tammany Hall, or Leonard Jerome, the Beau Brummell of Manhattan's isle, conspicuous in his newly-imported four-in-hand drag, may be pointed out, and their appearance commented on in the usual free and outspoken American fashion; but the horses are the real attraction, and no wonder; for there are some magnificent specimens to be seen, of which any one might be proud, much less a free and enlightened citizen of 'the great Republic.'

Although, both before and after the war of Independence in the last century, the English governors and generals used to be in the habit of getting over racehorses from the mother country, so that they might still continue to indulge in their favourite pastime, even when separated from the festive shades of Newmarket, still the sport of flat racing, as we practise it, never would take root in American soil, and never will, certainly, while trotting is encouraged, and there does not seem much chance at present of *that* dying out. During the time I was in New York, Mr. Leonard Jerome, already noticed

above, made a very gallant attempt to try and give English racing another chance in the Empire City, and a better one than it had in the somewhat puritanical eastern States. He established a very well laid-out course at Fordham, a pretty village in Westchester county, on the other side of the river, and at the extreme end of the island on which New York city is built. He also imported horses, jockeys, and trainers at great expense; and finally started a club on the principle of the one in Paris, of which the valiant Duc de Grammont was such a prominent member, and may be still again, when the reign of Thiers shall end. Racing here took place every year in May, but, in spite of all that money could do, only the shoddy aristocracy of Fifth Avenue could be got to attend, both the better class and the mass of 'the great unwashed' holding aloof. The New Yorkers generally, as well as the inhabitants of most of the principal cities in the States, would rather see the most second-rate trotting match than the best flat race à l'Anglais that ever was run. Neither do the native horses take kindly to the sport. I have only seen one good racehorse on the Jerome course in three seasons, and that was Old Kentucky, a Virginian horse of English descent, which has carried everything before him for so many years, that he may be looked upon as a sort of Transatlantic Fisherman, that wonder of the turf.

Next to trotting matches, and even ranking before them as regards its universality, I should say that gambling at cards was the principal resource of those in want of something wherewith to get through their spare time in America; for it is largely indulged in by high and low, rich and poor alike, with no distinction whatever, save as to the respective amounts of their stakes. As they are taxed by law, it may be said that lotteries are openly recognised by the executive, although none are supposed to be permitted to exist in any of those States incorporated in the Union. This fact, however, is easily evaded by making their head-quarters at Havana, or in some of the territories which are without the pale of the constitutional law. The drawings of these are to be seen daily advertised in the newspapers, without any pretence whatever; and the agents of the lotteries, or brokers, keep offices called policy shops, which are also duly licensed by the law that is presumed to prevent them, and where you can any day walk in without disguise and buy a share in the next 'presentation'! The negroes are great fellows for patronising these places, and spend every spare cent they can scrape together in thus wooing dame Fortune, most unsuccessfully as a rule. There is a legend current in darkey land that once upon a time an Ethiopian gentleman became a millionaire by dreaming of the lucky numbers 4, 45, and 15, and backing his vision; but the generality of his countrymen who follow in his footsteps do not by any means achieve so happy a result.

The richer and more speculative members of the sporting fraternity play heavily at the different 'Faro' banks, or private 'hells,' which are tolerated *sub rosa* in New York and most of the other chief cities of the Union. At Saratoga, and one or two other favoured localities, gambling is allowed openly, as at Homburg or Baden-Baden; but the 'Empire City' and its imitators in wickedness, like the virtuous Boston, makes a pretence of decency, which cannot fail to rebound to its credit when it is publicly known at the same time that two of the principal judges at the bench, besides the whole crew of the city magistracy, are as great gamblers, or 'sportsmen,' as they are characteristically called in the States, as could be found anywhere. I remember, in the winter of '66, just after a great *razzia* by the police on some of the alleged chief gambling dens of Manhattan, reading a few mornings afterwards in the columns of the leading papers of a great 'sitting' held at 'Faro,' wherein chief-magistrate Ben Wood had lost the sum of some two hundred thousand dollars to congress-man John Morrissey, the ex-prize-fighter and backer of Heenan, and now law-maker of the United States. It reminded one of the iniquitous times of the 'Finest Gentleman in Europe,' when Fox and Sheridan used to pauperise their unhappy descendants at chicken-hazard.

Another popular game, before it was suppressed by the police, was called 'Kino,' somewhat resembling the old German one of Lotto. Each player was furnished with a cardboard on which are inscribed various numbers, taken at random apparently from the figures 1 to 70, although they are selected on the strict algebraical theory of combinations, and no sets of cards are altogether alike. When each player had paid his money—fifty cents it used to be—and selected his card, the proprietor of the establishment would turn a wheel, as in the drawing of a lottery, and call out each number that dropped out in rotation, the players covering up any that might happen to be on their cards similar to the one drawn with a round disk of ivory like a draughtman, and the one who should happen to cover up all the numbers on his cardboard first called out 'Keeno!' and won the game, with all the stakes of the players, ten per cent being primarily extracted on each game to pay the proprietor of the place. As a game rarely occupied more than ten minutes, the promoter of it used to find it an extremely lucrative pursuit, until the police stopped it as contrary to law. A Dutchman, whom I met one day on board a ferry-boat, in speaking of it gave me a very concise description of the game, which I afterwards found on witnessing it was true to the letter. He said, 'It is a ting vare one mans call out Keeno! and everybodies else say, "O, tam!"'

'Euchre,' a sort of Americanised piquet, is the only really scientific game at cards played in the States, while being thought too prosy and long for our go-ahead cousins, who like to win or lose

their money in the shortest time possible; but 'Draw poker' or 'Brag' is the favourite of all, immense sums being lost at it every year on the boats that run between the Levee at New Orleans and St. Louis on the Mississippi. The water generally seems to have a strong gambling influence on all Americans, and you see more play on board steamers than anywhere else. I remember once hearing of two men who were playing 'draw poker' on a Californian boat, and bragged all the way against each other without parting with their cards day after day, until the vessel arrived at New York, each was so confident of his good hand. At the termination of the voyage they submitted their cards to an arbitrator, as neither would give in, when it was found that *each* held four aces, the highest possible. Of course two packs had become mixed; but it was 'a tall brag that, I guess, sirree,' as the narrator said to me.

The school of muscular Christianity, of which Mr. Charles Kingsley is so great a prophet and exponent, has not spread so widely in the States as with us at home. Although all the various armories of the numerous volunteer regiments of New York and Brooklyn are fitted with gymnasiums, of which one would think the members of the corps would make use, all the young men evince the strongest disinclination for athletic sports; and even the national game of base-ball is not cultivated to one-tenth the extent that cricket is in England. The Americans are far too fond of close application to business without any corresponding and necessary relaxation of a healthful nature. When the 'dry-goods store' is closed, the young clerk, instead of having a good healthy game with his fellows to renovate his relaxed tissues, saunters off to the theatre after the heavy tea-supper at his boarding-house, or else roams about the streets with a 'chaw' in his mouth. Hence it is that in the towns you seldom see a healthy-looking young man, although there are plenty such out in the country; all have a sallow broken-down look, and, aging before their time, generally die at years when a native of this country is in the prime of life.

There are two cricket clubs in the Empire City, the St. George's, which used to possess a remarkably pretty little ground in the Elysian fields at Hoboken; and the New York club, both composed principally of Englishmen desirous of keeping up their national game. These play several matches every year with the few clubs at Philadelphia and Boston, which they can get to compete with them; but, although they struggle gallantly to sustain the prestige of cricket in America, its fate has been sealed since base-ball was taken up as the national game. The occasional visits of the All-England Eleven have given it a sort of spasmodic impetus for the time being, but ever since the war its influence has been slowly but surely waning in favour of the shorter sport, which has the advantage of being quickly played out—a great thing in Transatlantic eyes.

Base-ball is like our rounders, as has been mentioned in a former article, and nine men a-side contest for the palm of victory; so eighteen 'innings' are played in all, which can be easily done in a few hours, instead of a match extending to two or three days, as in cricket. The chief clubs in the States are the Atlantic of Brooklyn, and the Union of Philadelphia, who have annual struggles at which large crowds assemble; at a cricket match there hardly seem a dozen spectators on the ground, apart from the friends of the clubs engaged, so void of interest is it thought, which opinion, indeed, may very well express the estimation in which base-ball is held in English eyes.

Boating is also not patronised to one-half the extent that it is with us, which is a great wonder, when one considers the splendid rivers and magnificent lakes there are throughout America. There are very few amateur clubs, and professional watermen are nearly unknown; of the latter, Walter Brown, who was to have rowed a race over here against the English champion of the Thames three years ago, only the matter fell through in consequence of Brown's illness, is the best I have seen. It may be remembered what a poor exhibition the crack New York sculler Hammill made when he pulled against Harry Kelly in '66. I remember what great disappointment his defeat occasioned at the time in the States; although it was all put down to unfair play! The Columbia and Gulick clubs of New York are the only two amateur associations worthy of notice with the exception of Harvard and Yale, who pull against each other every year, as our Oxford and Cambridge crews do, on Lake Quinzigamond, at Worcester, in Massachusetts—a very fine piece of water. I witnessed one of their usual contests there a few years back, but cannot say it was at all up to our University race. The course was a mile and a-half out, round a stake boat, and return to the starting point, making some three miles' distance in all. One cannot very well see the advantage of this stake boat, as in rounding it a foul is frequently occasioned; and besides, a race straight away would be a much better test both of continuance and speed. The Harvard crew, who won the race at which I was present, did the course in eighteen minutes, which was thought fair time there on tideless water; but any one who had seen the two different styles of the American and Oxford men, before their celebrated match on the Thames in the year 1869, could have no hesitation as to the result. It was a pity, however, to save heartburnings and after dissension and unpleasant remarks, which were very rife in the States, that the Harvardians were not allowed to row, as they were accustomed, without a coxswain, and the English crew as they liked also, with one, although it is questionable whether the finish would have been altered if such had been the case, for the Thames is not a very easy river to navigate without a steersman. The style of pulling

in vogue over the water is altogether different from what it is here, and Mr. Morrison would open his eyes with horror if he saw the sort of coaching to which an American Gyas or Cloanthus is subjected. Men are taught to pull almost entirely with their arms, neither using their stretchers nor putting the weight of their bodies in the stroke. The result is a short, jerky, quick action, fast enough for a little distance, but never lasting enough for a long race, as a man gets pumped out at it before he begins to feel himself in the boat. The 'ships' used are usually heavy six-oared gigs, outriggers and light-built racing boats like ours being seldom or never seen on the water. In fact, boating is as yet in its infancy there; and although the late Harvard contest with Oxford will without doubt put a great deal of additional life into it in the States, they have a good deal to learn before they can attempt to compete, with any prospect of success, against a fairly-trained English crew.

To complete this slight sketch of the sports and sporting matters current in America, it may be stated that prize-fighting has gone out of fashion there as with us, and a good riddance too; although a lot of English scoundrels, who were fairly driven out from here, tried to bolster it up for some time; but the iniquities of the 'ring' worked its own ruin, apart from any legislative interference, and the merry boys with their 'bunches of fives' need no longer hope to make a fortune out of speculative Yankees, for their game is fairly played out, even in the land of humbugs. Billiards are largely played both North and South, and the Americans, as a rule, are better average players than we are; the great charm of the game there is, that it seldom leads to gambling, as 'pool' is unknown, and nobody ever dreams of playing for anything save the tables. It may be said to be the only good exercise that our Transatlantic cousins indulge in, fishing and shooting, or 'hunting' as the latter is called, being as rarely practised as the major sports—that is, in all thickly-inhabited places east of the prairies. It would be well for the future generation of the business men of the States, that they incorporated a little more of the backwoods element in their everyday life, and tempered their pursuit of the 'almighty dollar' with a slight *souçon* of physical relaxation and healthy exercise. The axiom, 'too much work and no play,' holds as good for Jonathan as it does for John Bull.

JOHN C. HUTCHESON.

MY FIRST DUEL

It is the fashion nowadays in this country to reprobate duelling as foolish and immoral. However much it may still linger amongst other civilised nations, *we*, at any rate (so we tell ourselves), have lifted far away from the absurd habit of considering a cartel as the necessary consequence of the slightest provocation—the most effectual settlement of every trivial dispute.

It may perhaps be doubted whether the entire abandonment of the practice of duelling has, in its results, been productive of unmitigated good; whether cases have not arisen, and do not frequently arise, of which a duel would be by far the most satisfactory solution—cases in which the most severe moralist could scarcely sternly condemn the course,—where a man might take his own life in his hand for the sake of inflicting well-merited punishment upon another, and yet hope to meet with no harsh inexorable doom if summoned to the presence of the all-merciful Judge; where the mere knowledge that a certain line of action must inevitably be pursued at the risk of his own life would suffice to deter a man from an infamous, and in this age too little punished crime. Such cases, however, if they exist at all, are, it must be admitted, rare; and at any rate, duelling is now extinct in England. Nevertheless, it is not so very many years ago since the practice fell into disrepute, and I have still a vivid recollection of all the incidents connected with my own first duel.

Malta in 18—, not Malta as it is now; no mighty casemated fort towering in colossal strength below the Baracca; no huge cavernous tank or naval prison on Corradino; no dry dock at the Marsa,—no, not Malta as it is now, certainly, but still the same Malta, still the same paradise for nine months of the year, the same purgatory for the remaining three. The fierce heat of summer is giving place to the more tempered warmth of autumn, and men, worn out and enervated by an unusually hot season, are rejoicing in the prospect of a change, and looking anxiously, longingly, for the first shower of rain that shall impart some slight degree of coolness to the air, and render the day somewhat more endurable. The eye, wearied with the continual glare reflected eternally from the white houses, the dusty roads, and the bare glowing rock, in vain seeks relief from the brown hardened sands. The grass is parched and withered, save in some few favoured sheltered spots; and the only green thing upon which the throbbing parched eye can rest is an occasional carob or fig tree. The very ground is athirst for rain, and the shrunken earth opens in great yawning fissures, as if riven by some dire convulsion of nature.

Every one, pallid and enfeebled with the heat, is looking forward to the approaching winter; and many are projecting picnics and excursions to some one of those few spots where vegetation is still to be found, and where, under the luxurious shade of some welcome tree, with the slumberous murmur of a tiny streamlet, or the ceaseless ripple of the ever-heaving ocean, falling soothingly on their ears, and the sweet odour of the orange blooms hanging heavy in the motionless air, they may alternately watch the shimmering heat rising from the glowing ground, and refresh their eyes, wearied with the dazzling glare of the Valetta streets, with the sight of a green tree or a small patch of verdure-clad ground.

Just at this time the ship to which I belonged, his Majesty's frigate *Spartiate*, came into Malta harbour to get a new bowsprit fitted, in place of the one which she had 'sprung' in a squall off the Greek coast a few days before. We had been at sea nearly the whole of the long hot summer, and officers and crew were now equally delighted at the prospect of a run on shore. Most of us, however, were very soon tired of the parallel dusty terraces and steep flights of stone steps that constitute the streets of Valetta, and longed for something more nearly allied to the green fields and shady lanes of home. So, starting off one forenoon, and taking my servant with us with a hamper of provisions by way of luncheon, four of us chartered a caleche and bade the driver take us to *Em Taleh*—a precipitous valley hidden amongst the rocky hills, somewhat to the southward of the centre of the island, calm, secluded, beautiful, and green; and, even then, famed for its strawberry gardens, and a favourite resort for a day's excursion. We strolled about, and lounged under the trees and dreamily smoked our cigars, and had luncheon, and lazily smoked again; and then I, who had never visited the place before, quitted the others, and started off on a short tour of exploration in the neighbourhood. I had not proceeded far, and was sauntering meditatively beside a thick hedge of the prickly-pear cactus that separated me from the narrow path running through the grounds, when I heard a sound that caused me to stop short in my walk and look eagerly around. It was a slight cry—evidently born of fear, and issuing from feminine lips—and appeared to come from the other side of the hedge, to climb over or break through which seemed equally an impossibility.

Fortunately, however, a few yards in front of me, where some herdsman had torn down the succulent plants to eke out the scanty sustenance which the withered herbage afforded to his milch goats, was a large gap. Thither I quickly bent my steps, and, emerging upon the pathway, became at once aware of the cause of the cry that I had heard. Standing hesitatingly, evidently unwilling to turn back, and yet afraid to advance, was a tall and beautiful girl, coiled up in the centre of the path directly in front of her, fi

menacing in his lissom strength, with head erect and his bright eyes gleaming with malice, lay a large black snake.

I have often since thought that, much as the girl was terrified at the reptile, those two formed, by nature, no ill-assorted pair. But I did not think so then. I suppose no man ever cares to expatiate in detail upon the charms and beauty of the woman who has aroused in his heart all the passion of which his nature is capable. It sounds so much like profaning the sacredness of love, and putting the woman upon whom one's dearest affections are concentrated on a par with a horse one is anxious to dispose of. At any rate, I am not going to give a detailed description of Rose Cornewall. It is sufficient that, as I saw her then for the first time, timid and shrinking, with her cheek paled, and her large lustrous eyes dilated with aversion and fear, I thought I had never gazed upon a sight so beautiful. As I ran towards her, the snake took fright, and, gliding away, succeeded, much to my annoyance, in making good his escape amongst the strawberry plants that fringed one side of the path; and then the least I could do was to offer my arm to the trembling terrified girl, and crave permission to escort her to her party. We had not far to go, and then I gave my name and was duly introduced to her aunt, a Mrs. Luton, and warmly thanked for my opportune interposition. Aunt and niece, I found, had not long come out from England, and were going to spend the winter in Malta. So, after expressing a hope that I should meet them at some of the balls during the approaching season, and obtaining leave to call upon them in the mean while, I rejoined my companions and recounted my adventure.

The season began early that year in Malta. The summer cruise of the Mediterranean fleet was an unusually short one, and when the ships had returned to their winter moorings, balls and parties soon commenced in earnest. The intervening period had been a busy time for me. When once the *Spartiate* got into the hands of the dockyard, it was discovered that she stood in need of all sorts of repairs—that she wanted caulking; that her lower rigging was worn out, and required to be replaced; so altogether my time was pretty well occupied. Nevertheless, I had found leisure to call twice at Mrs. Luton's, and each time I had had the good fortune to find her and her niece at home; so that I was already engaged for several dances before I entered the room at the first ball of the season, and found that Rose Cornewall had arrived there before me.

There is no need to chronicle the events of the next few weeks. They were very much a repetition of the old, old story. Absurd as it may seem to say so, I was really hopelessly in love with a girl whom I had not seen half-a-dozen times; and before Christmas came, standing with her in the shelter of one of the bastions of Saint Elmo, watching the huge white waves as they came towering in, driven onward before the fury of a fierce *gregale*, and sending great

showers of spray high into the air over the highest battlements of the fort, I received from her lips the solemn promise to be my wife.

Only a few days after my engagement to Rose had received the formal sanction of her aunt, Harry Gordon, my old messmate in the Argus, came out to join the Spartiate. He was one of the best fellows that ever drew breath—high-minded, honourable, and true as steel; and, proud of my beautiful fiancée, I took him one day to be introduced to her. Rose's back was turned as we entered the room; she was standing by the window, and had not heard the servant announce us; but hearing my voice, she looked round and came towards us. As she did so, her gaze rested for a moment upon Harry. She started, as I fancied, perceptibly, and every particle of colour left her face, returning in an instant with a rapidity that flushed even her neck with the deepest crimson. In astonishment I turned to Harry, and as I did so, fancied I intercepted a quick glance of puzzled recognition; but as he did not claim acquaintance a moment afterwards when I introduced him, and as Rose ascribed her momentary indisposition to the shock of suddenly meeting a stranger when she had imagined I was unaccompanied, I had no option but to conclude that I must have been mistaken. Nevertheless, I had an uneasy, indefinable sensation, almost amounting to a dread of I knew not what. The conversation flagged, and Harry and I presently left together.

My companion was unusually silent as we walked along; so, partly by way of starting a conversation, partly to quiet the uneasy feeling in my own mind, I asked him whether he and Miss Cornewall had met before. He hesitated a moment ere he replied, and then said, 'No. To tell you the truth, Charlie, she is the very image of a Miss Douglas that I used to know in London a couple of years ago, after we were paid-off in the old Argus. That was what made me look so queer when I first saw her. But of course they can't be the same.'

'No, of course not, as your friend's name was Douglas, and Rose's is Cornewall,' I answered pettishly.

'Yes, of course they are different,' he assented. 'Well, I shall go on board again. I suppose you won't come just yet? Good-bye.'

I went for a short walk that day before I returned to Mrs. Luton's. I was thoroughly vexed and uncomfortable. That Harry was not quite sure that the resemblance between Miss Cornewall and Miss Douglas was *only* a resemblance, I was perfectly certain of, from the tone in which he spoke, and I could not but confess that Rose's sudden pallor was, at any rate, an unfortunate coincidence; but then, to admit the possibility of this, opened up the way to a whole train of suspicions that I would not put into words, even to my own heart—that, indeed, when I had returned to Miss Cornewall's, I felt ashamed so far to yield to as to ask her, as I had intended to do, whether she had ever before met Harry Gordon. From that day forward, however, an estrangement gradually sprung up between Harry

and myself. I felt instinctively that he did not like Rose, and would not be sorry to see my engagement to her broken off; and this gave rise to a feeling of irritation and pride on my part, that frequently prompted me to say things to him which but for his uniform courtesy and good nature might have caused an open rupture. And so a coolness gradually grew up between us, that threatened to increase as time went on, and to sap even the very foundations of our old friendship.

All this time, too, the uneasy feeling that originated in my mind on the day that I introduced Harry to Miss Cornewall had been gaining strength. I could not account for it nor analyse it; it seemed like a vague dread of some impending evil, and, much as I struggled against it, I could not shake it off. Even in her presence it did not always entirely disappear; but there, at any rate, it was repressed by my passionate love for her, which forbade me even to hint at anything that might imply any want of confidence on my part. And so things went on, until the day was fixed that was to make Rose and me one. I had made up my mind that I would invite Harry to the ceremony, and the following morning I took an opportunity of doing so—moved thereto more perhaps by bravado than by any wish that he should actually be present on the occasion. He congratulated me, as I thought, very coldly upon the approaching event, and courteously declined my invitation; then turning suddenly towards me with a burst of his old cordial manner, and speaking very rapidly and earnestly, he said,

‘Nolan, I can’t let this go on without an effort to stop it. I must tell you—I ought to have told you long ago. For heaven’s sake don’t marry Miss Cornewall. I have the best of reasons for knowing that she is the same girl I used to know in London as Hester Douglas, and *you* know I was not living a very steady life then. Yes, strike me if you like, Charlie,’ he continued, as I made a stride towards him; ‘only listen. You and I are old friends, and I can’t stand quietly by and see you innocently marry a girl that I *know* ought not to be your wife. Don’t believe me; ask her—ask her whether she ever knew a Miss Douglas in London, or ever lived at Surbiton; and draw your own conclusions from her answers. You might have seen from her face, when you introduced me to her, that we had met before,’ he went on with a half sneer.

I had been silent with astonishment during Harry’s speech; but the last few words, the cutting reference to that event, the origin of all those uneasy doubts and half-formed suspicions that had ever since so cruelly haunted me, gave words to my anger, and caused me to form a sudden determination.

‘I will ask her; and if, as I suspect, your statement is false—’ I paused, almost choking with passion.

‘I will abide the issue,’ he said calmly, and left the cabin.

Two hours afterwards I was in Miss Cornewall's presence. I had been at first all impatience to hear her denial of any acquaintance with Miss Douglas; but during the long row to the shore, and the toilsome walk up the steep hill that leads from the Custom-house to the gates, I had full leisure to grow cool, and to reflect that Harry had spoken of no suspicions, but had made a positive statement, which he, with his habitual caution, would be, of all men, the least likely to do, unless he had good reason for believing in its truth. And if it were true—; but by the time my reflections had reached this stage, I had arrived at Mrs. Luton's door, and after a moment's pause I rang the bell.

Rose was seated at the table, writing a letter, as I entered. She got up and came towards me, and taking her hand in mine, I led her to the couch at the end of the room, and seated myself beside her.

'Rose, when you were in London, did you ever hear of a Miss Douglas?'

Her eyes flashed under their long black silky lashes.

'Mr. Gordon has been talking to you,' she said vehemently.

I looked at her in amazement. If Harry's statement were untrue, what possible association could there be in her mind between him and Miss Douglas? She saw that she had betrayed herself, and continued gently,

'I thought you knew that he called here the other day. Did he not tell you of it? I forgot to do so. I don't think he likes me, Charlie. O, my darling, don't let him come between us!' she murmured softly, as she nestled closer to my side.

I am neither able nor desirous to follow out the interview. A loving woman's (and with all her faults Rose *did* love me) endearments and caresses are too sacred to be lightly spoken of; and, excepting in so far as the narration of them may serve to the gratification of a morbid curiosity, it can be a matter of but little interest to any excepting the two most intimately concerned. I suppose I was a fool; perhaps my love blinded me. No doubt I ought to have seen through it all; but somehow I didn't. I only saw a beautiful girl whom I passionately loved—an angel who had been maliciously slandered. Carried away by the witchery of the moment, I forgot my long-cherished doubts; I forgot the probabilities, the suspicious circumstances of the case. It seemed impossible to associate anything evil with one so fair, so gentle, so loving; and returning once more to the unswerving allegiance, to the unwavering confidence of old, I wondered with shame how I could ever have allowed myself to doubt. My heart wanted to be convinced, and it was convinced; but my reason was stubborn, however much I might decline to listen to its voice; and this did not tend to abate the irritation which, by an utterly irrational but perfectly natural reaction, I felt against Harry, and which induced me to regard him rather as one who had wilfully

insulted my future wife than as one who, wishing to save me from what he justly regarded as an irreparable disgrace, had been led to make a false statement under the belief in its truth—a mistake for which an apology might be a sufficient atonement.

No doubt, had I had time for reflection, I should have viewed it in this light; but unfortunately, before I had left Mrs. Luton's house many minutes, whilst the glamour was still strong upon me, I met a party of men, foremost among whom was Harry Gordon. They were most of them acquaintances of my own, and little as a conversation with them accorded with my mood of the moment, I knew it was impossible to pass them without speaking.

'We are going up to Marti's to play a pool, Nolan,' said Bertie Chestle, when the first greeting was over. 'Will you come?'

'Thanks, I'm going on board.'

'O, nonsense: you'll do better on the board of green-cloth. Come along.'

'It's no good, Chestle; Nolan has given up all that sort of thing,' broke in Harry, with a laugh.

The speech was innocent enough; but in my then state of feeling towards Gordon I was chafed that he should make any remarks about my actions; and in as hard cold a tone as I could assume, I replied, 'Mr. Gordon is requested to confine his attention to his own affairs, and, when he does meddle with other people's, not to make statements which are deliberately untrue.'

Every one looked at me in astonishment. Harry turned very white, and from between his compressed lips came one word: 'Charlie!'

'I said, sir, that your statement was deliberately untrue. Need I say more?'

One glance of pained surprise, and, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, he took the arm of one of his companions, and walked away. As soon as he was gone, I turned to a man whom I knew, a captain in the 205th.

'Lane, you must see me through this,' I said impetuously.

'With all my heart. Let us go to my quarters. Gentlemen, *au revoir*. If Gordon or De Lacy wants any information, tell him that Nolan is with me, will you? Nolan, what is all this about?' he continued, as soon as we were out of hearing. 'I don't want to be inquisitive, but no one will believe but that there was some concealed motive for what you said—you and Gordon such old friends too; and if I am to act for you, don't you think, for your own sake, I ought to know it, so as to set you right in case of accidents?'

'I am afraid I can't tell you,' I replied. 'There is a motive, of course; but you must forgive me for using my own discretion about communicating it to any one.'

Lane looked at me a moment in silence, and nothing more was said on the subject till we reached his quarters. There, about an

hour afterwards, De Lacy joined us. He and I had never been introduced to one another; but after a hurried glance round the room, to assure himself that there were no casual intruders, he walked towards me.

'Lientenant Nolan, I believe?' I bowed affirmatively as I took his card. 'I need hardly say, I presume, that I am here on the part of Mr. Gordon. This seems a sad business. Can nothing be done?'

'Nothing,' I replied briefly.

'Gordon has not been very explicit; but he hinted that there were reasons. Surely you will explain?' he broke off abruptly.

'I will explain nothing. Captain Lane acts for me.'

'Then things must take their course;' and he turned to Lane.

Their conference was long and earnest. I heard afterwards that De Lacy tried again to bring about an understanding, and even admitted that he had been instructed to use every effort to induce me to apologise; but that Lane told him he was satisfied that it would be perfectly useless to endeavour to obtain any retraction or apology from me. At last De Lacy left, bowing ceremoniously to me as he quitted the room, and then Lane turned to me.

'It is settled for to-morrow morning at five o'clock, behind the Phenician ruins on Corradino: pistols, of course. We had better have some dinner now, and that will give you an hour or two before you turn in to see after any business you want to attend to. I suppose you'll like a long night for the sake of steadying the hand, and you'll have to be up early.'

I have 'been out' several times since; but I don't think that I ever experienced the same feelings on the eve of a meeting that I did on this occasion. It was not only that it was my first duel, that all the sensations connected with it were novel; but I seemed to be impelled by perfectly savage ferocity—by a sheer animal lust for blood. I knew that Harry was a dead shot; but the possibility of his hitting me did not greatly affect my mind. The sole feeling of which I was conscious was one of intense delight that I was about to have an opportunity of avenging what I had induced myself to consider his maliciously false imputations upon Miss Cornewall.

I had but little to do in the way of preparation, and that little was soon done—a letter to my mother, another to Rose, a few lines to one or two old friends on the chance of the worst—and then Lane and I drew our chairs up to the window, and smoked and talked until our watches warned us that, with the prospect of an early journey before us, we could no longer defer going to bed.

Lane awoke me in good time the next morning.

'I have given you till the last minute, Nolan. Edwards will be here directly with the calèche: I sent him for it some time ago. You'll find a cup of coffee in the next room; or would you prefer a nip of brandy—just a something to steady the nerves?'

Out through the Porta Reale, across Floriana parade-ground, round the Marsa, with scarcely a word spoken between us; and then, where the road turns off on the left towards Burmola, we left our calèche. A scramble over a low stone wall, a five minutes' walk through the young barley sprouting beneath our feet, and we reached the ground—a small field encompassed with low walls of shapeless blocks of jagged unhewn stone piled one on another. In one corner of it was a circle of upright single stones, commonly known as the Phœnician ruins—a sort of Stonehenge in miniature—and towards this we bent our way. There was no one behind them, and we were evidently first on the ground; so we sat down and awaited the arrival of our adversaries. It was one of those clear glorious mornings that are so common in the Mediterranean in early spring. Behind us, the slope of the ground, while it concealed us from observation from the ships in the harbour, also shut in the view in that direction; but in front of us the country stretched out for miles in a highly cultivated plain, till in the distance the rampart and towers of Città Vecchia bounded the scene, and stood out, white with the early rays of the morning sun, above the purple-blue haze that toned down without obscuring the varying tints of the intervening valley. Every now and again the rumble of some country cart, or the monotonous drone of some peasant labourer hastening to his daily toil, broke upon the silence; but beyond that all was still. Suddenly we heard the sound of falling stones, and looking round, saw Gordon, De Lacy, and some third person whom I did not know, vaulting the low wall that encompassed the field. On seeing us they stopped, and Lane rising and advancing a step or two towards them, he and De Lacy drew a little apart, and I was left standing alone. Presently I saw the seconds measuring the ground, and then Lane came up to me and led me to my post, saying, as he put the cold butt of the pistol into my hand,

‘Gordon has brought a doctor with him. Mind and aim low.’ Then he added in a louder voice, ‘Gentlemen, are you both ready? Mr. De Lacy gives the words, one—two—three; at the last word you fire.’

There we stood—Harry and I—in the brightening light, half facing one another, sombre and stern, each of us with his pistol in his hand, waiting for the word. How long this state of expectation lasted I cannot say—not more than a few seconds, I suppose; but it sufficed to carry me back in thought many years, and to bring before me a vision of the old parsonage house and ivy-mantled church, the green fields and shady lanes, amongst which my childhood had been passed. At length De Lacy's voice recalled me to myself, as in clear incisive tones he slowly uttered the words,

‘One—two—three.’

The two reports rang out simultaneously, and, with a slight cry,

Harry fell on his face on the ground. Then, forgetting all about Rose—remembering only the old friendship between Gordon and myself—I rushed forwards in a paroxysm of remorse at my handiwork. But the seconds had anticipated me; and before I could cover the intervening ground, De Lacy was supporting Harry's head upon his knee. The doctor, too, was kneeling by him, examining the wound. The bullet had entered on the right side, where Harry had exposed it by raising his arm to fire, but the flow of blood was very slight. The surgeon, however, evidently thought it serious; for after a short examination, he rose and shook his head sadly. Slight as the motion was, Harry's eye detected it, and he made a sign to the others to draw back. The seconds looked at one another for a moment, and then, in spite of the irregularity of the proceeding, they complied; and taking De Lacy's place, I bent down to catch the words as they fell from Harry's lips.

'Charlie, I'm afraid I'm done for this time. Don't reproach yourself, old fellow; it couldn't be helped. Of course, we know what it was about, however little others may. I didn't want to do any one any harm,' he went on almost plaintively, 'or to violate any one's confidence; but I was in hopes that what I said to you yesterday would have led to your engagement being broken off; but as you have chosen to fight for her, I suppose it is on still. Charlie, you mustn't marry her; indeed you mustn't. Put your hand into my pocket, and you'll find a bundle of letters—that's it—that will tell you all about it.'

Harry's voice had been growing weaker and weaker as he spoke, until the last few words were almost a whisper; so I made a sign to the others, and carefully, tenderly we carried him to his calèche, and placed him in it. He was taken to De Lacy's rooms, where for weeks he hovered between life and death, and where I saw him frequently. A good constitution pulled him through at last, however, in spite of the doctors; and the Spartiate being then up the Adriatic, he did not rejoin her, but invalided to England.

And the packet? When I had gone on board, and could open it quietly in the seclusion of my own cabin, I found that it consisted of four letters. The first was from Harry to myself, and was merely to the effect that, having in view the possibility that the duel might be fatal to him, and thinking that I ought to be made aware of the truth, he had prepared this packet, to furnish me with the evidence of it, in case of his decease. Then came two other letters, addressed to him, and dated about two years back. I had little need to read them—the handwriting told me who the author was; but I read them through. They were both signed 'Hester Douglas;' and their contents were such as to leave no reasonable doubt of the relation which the writer bore to Gordon at the time they were written. The blow had fallen. All Harry's imputations—all those suspicious

that his words had suggested, but that I had never allowed myself to entertain—were true. There was no need of farther evidence; but, as if to render it complete, there was the fourth letter still unread, and I resolutely forced myself to read it. Even at that moment I found time to notice that it looked newer, less soiled than the others. It was dated ‘Strada Stretta, Malta, Feb. 2, 18—’ (the day that I had introduced Harry to Miss Cornewall), and ran as follows:

‘I knew it must come at last—that we should meet again. But you will keep my secret, won’t you? O Harry, for the sake of the love you once bore me, spare me. He knows nothing—need never know anything. And I love him, Harry, and have put away the part with the old name. Why should you visit the sins of Hester Douglas upon
ROSE CORNEWALL?’

When I had finished reading the letters, I could not at once decide upon the next step. My brain was in a whirl, and for the time I seemed incapable of volition. At length, however, I determined to adopt a suggestion contained in Harry’s note to myself, namely, that I should forward the letters to Miss Cornewall. I enclosed them therefore in an envelope, together with a few lines from myself, telling her the circumstances under which they came into my possession, and intimating that, all things considered, it would, in my opinion, be better that we should not meet again. From that day to this I have never seen Rose Cornewall; but some twelve months afterwards I heard that she had become a Roman Catholic, and had entered a convent at Naples.

As for myself, I did not long remain on the station. The duel was a great deal talked about, and all sorts of reasons were assigned for it by popular rumour; and I was sick at heart, and not ambitious of notoriety. I wanted some place where I could see new faces and find new occupation. So, within a month of the duel—as soon, in fact, as Gordon was out of danger—I applied to be superseded, and came home to England.

When I came to think coolly about it afterwards, it did appear somewhat extraordinary that, considering Harry’s renown as a shot, I should have come scatheless out of the affair. I had not been home long, however, when I made a discovery that perhaps accounted for his bad shooting. He was then, and had been for some time previously, secretly engaged to my sister. The whole thing came out when he invalided to England, and they were married shortly after. I do not know whether Harry ever made a clean breast to his wife of what happened in Malta; but I am inclined to think that their second daughter, Rose (she is the mother of two children herself now), is not unlikely to benefit by the will of her crusty old bachelor uncle.

A FEW DAYS' FISHING

I WAS always fond of fishing. As soon as I was allowed to go near the water, I took naturally to the gentle art. My enthusiasm for angling was unbounded; and when I couldn't fish, it was a pleasure to put my rods together, and rummage in the creel, and overhaul the tackle. If they had been as grand in my time, I should never have passed a fishing-tackle shop without stopping and feasting my eyes with Mr. Pennel's 'flights,' and with the gorgeous artificial baits prepared for every fish in river or the sea.

But next to the delight of fishing was the delight of talking about it; and fine yarns of fishing days, possible and impossible, have been spun over and over again from my youth up until now. It is remarkable also what a tendency anglers have to talk about their art after dinner, and how many fishing expeditions are then arranged which unfortunately never come off.

I daresay it *does* seem a droll amusement to many. I am sure it does; for I have known men who were sensible and liberal enough in the matter of foibles generally, who have become downright rabid in their denunciations of angling and anglers. I never could find, however, that these men knew anything of fishing; or they had been where there were no fish, or at any rate nothing that they were able to catch.

I never knew a fisherman who had not a keen eye for the beauty of scenery. For a tired man, the placid flow of the river, the invigorating breezes of the open country, and the sensation of being far away from all cares and *interruptions*, constitute in themselves elements of happiness, even if the fish are not 'well on the feed.'

Take the Great Western train to Cookham; there hire a punt and drop down the river, making the best 'pitches.' You will pass Lord Boston's estate at Hedsor, with its verdant lawns shelving down to the water's edge, and where, if you have permission, you may stay and land many a lusty trout. Then under the lovely woods of Cliefden, vocal with the songs of innumerable birds, and glowing with every shade of green and russet in the sloping sun. When you arrive at Maidenhead Bridge, if you should not have caught many fish (which will probably have been your own fault), you will have passed through some of the most beautiful scenery your heart could desire; and you will have brought an appetite to enjoy the very *recherché cuisine* of mine host of the Orkney Arms—the recreative summer quarters of the officers from Windsor.

Then, as you are whirled back in your train to London, you must feel that you have had a day of perfect delight. I use the 'you' of course in its strictly plural sense, for a man would scarcely be so selfish as to take all this enjoyment alone. I have seen a great many happy couples coming down the river, and loitering amid this beautiful scenery, who were evidently going 'with the stream.' I don't think I ever saw any one alone at the Orkney Arms.

I have said how fond the fraternity are of talking on angling, and it was this garrulity which secured me the 'few days' fishing' I am about to describe.

I had just been enjoying a trip to Marlow (an excellent fishing station, and also abounding with beautiful scenery), when a friend came to visit me from Devonshire. In the course of our conversation I entered upon my favourite theme, and, to my great delight, found him an enthusiastic fisherman. But all my pictures of glorious angling days, all my tales of prowess among the pike and perch, paled before the big tale he had to tell. He knew a place where there was only a carriage road to divide the open ocean from four hundred acres of fresh water; where you could hear the roar of the sea all through the day, while you looked on the placid waters of the valley; and where—O shade of Izaak Walton, listen!—where you took pike of from twenty to thirty pounds weight; where you must return to the water any pike under five pounds; and where you could catch perch, until you were compelled to leave off from sheer exhaustion.

I had heard a good many fishermen's stories, some true, some lies, but this was indeed a difficult tale to swallow.

Taking my friend's account *cum grano*, and extracting from him the promise to accompany me, I wrote to the landlord of the Sands Hotel, Slapton Lea, for rooms, a precaution which my friend assured me was essential. By return, I received my answer that the hotel was full, but that rooms could be secured in a fortnight. O Piscator! think of these pike of thirty pounds, and of these perch which were to weary you in lifting, and fancy those long fourteen days.

At length the letter arrived which told me the rooms were at our service; and with every accessory which the science of half a dozen fishing-tackle shops could supply, we started by the Great Western train on the longed-for fishing expedition.

Leaving Newton Junction, passing the pretty Tor Bay, running round the beautiful and enchanting Point off Brixham, watching the evening sun glittering on the Dart, we arrived at Kingswear—well known to yachtsmen, and a lovely place for all the world to visit.

They know how to live in Devonshire, and the dinner provided by our host at the Royal Yacht Hotel was by no means an exception to the general good fare. Dinner over, we went to the balcony to smoke a cigar. But what a heavenly scene met our eyes! The

western side of the hotel stands literally in the river Dart. The moon was shining on the rippling waters of the river, while exactly opposite was Dartmouth in a haze of light.

Has the reader seen this fairy-like spot? Those who have will know that we do not exaggerate one iota in describing it. Away to the south of Dartmouth, where the hills rise from the bed of the river, are villas dotted like nests in the rock; and we might have supposed that every house had been illuminated for our especial delectation. Far as the eye could reach the whole hillside was strewn with lights, as if glowworms held high carnival.

The lights, however, gradually faded, for human nature on that side of the water was getting tired, and we were at last left with the dull hazy light of Dartmouth, and the gorgeous moon still playing on the waters of the Dart. Of course we talked of the moon, and then we talked of—Well, no matter! It was time to go to bed, if we would keep tryst with the wagonette which was to meet us at nine o'clock in the morning at Dartmouth.

My friend knew all about Devonshire, and told me strange and weird stories about the hills there which were perfect precipices, and of winding, narrow, and not particularly good roads, where the coach from Dartmouth to Kingsbridge swayed and lurched to the horror of weak nerves. My nerves were not over strong in that particular, having been once wholly, and twice nearly, overturned in coaches. I therefore had, at the suggestion of my friend, written to the landlord of the Sands Hotel to send us a wagonette. We crossed the Dart, and found our conveyance at Dartmouth awaiting us most punctually.

I wonder what those who cultivate myrtles, geraniums, and fuschias in little pots in Middlesex would think of the glorious sight which met our eyes as soon as we left Dartmouth? There were houses on which geraniums and fuschias struggled which should soonest reach the top; houses covered with these plants as thickly as ivy covers our walls. There were myrtles in full blossom in the open air as large as may-trees, and one fuschia globosa, which hung over the road from a garden, a mass of bloom, was an absolute tree, with a stem a foot in circumference.

The road was, as my friend had described it, hilly and circuitous. We met the coach *en route* just as we were at the foot of a hill, down which it was making its way; and as it swung round over a bridge which turned with a sharp angle at the foot of it, we gave thanks that we had employed mine host's post-horses, while I registered a vow never to trust myself on that coach at any future visit.

At length, having mounted a hill, we found before us, displayed at large, the broad ocean, the 'four hundred acres of fresh water,' and, as my friend had described it, a narrow strip of road only dividing them. But alas for the pike! I detected in a moment that all

of pike-fishing was over, and that this journey at least I should hear the whirr of the reel to tell me a thirty-pound pike had been taken. The hot summer sun had dried up the water and lowered it, so that the pike would have certainly betaken themselves to the shoals—a nasty habit they have whenever the water is low.

My eyes had been for a long time strained for this vision, but at this moment I looked at my friend. I knew we had been passing through a light sand for some miles. I felt my skin grating most uncomfortably against my clothes, but I was unprepared for the sight which he, and of course I also, presented. Imagine sweeps turned yellow, and you have the picture of both of us.

But now we make another sudden turn, and run down the straight road to the Sands Hotel. There it stood, alone by itself on the flat sands, with a little paddock having a pagoda-like summer-house in the front of it. We did not know at that time what that pagoda contained.

The landlord awaited us. The landlord always awaits his guests at the Sands Hotel. He welcomes the coming and speeds the parting guest, but he never loses sight of him or his comforts. He bids him God-speed on his homeward journey. 'Homeward!'—never there was a home out of your own house, it is at the Sands Hotel, Slapton.

They are used to yellow sweeps at the Sands; and when we were conducted to our rooms, we found a sponging-bath already filled with sea water, and received the suggestion that if we would throw off all our clothes, and leave them just as they were, Boots would relieve them of the yellow sand, and we could make ourselves comfortable in our fishing-clothes. I always had a great affection for sea water, and had imitated it at a distance from the ocean with the aid of Tidman; but did ever dryad bathe in such water as Slapton offers you? I took up some of it in a tumbler, and it was pellucid as a running spring.

We had ordered luncheon, and were engaged upon it earnestly during our ride, when our female attendant requested to know if our German might speak to us. The order of Slapton is, that when you take rooms in the hotel a boat is allocated to you, and with it a fisherman; and boat and fisherman are yours exclusively until you leave the hotel. We expressed not only our willingness, but our desire, to see the custodian of the deep, and a knock at the door introduced 'Limping Dick,' so called from being possessed of only one leg. Dick bowed, and having ascertained that we should be ready to fish at 2.30, he quietly, and to my great astonishment, packed off with all our rods and the creel containing all the choice tackle which had been so carefully selected in London.

Luncheon over, we found that Dick knew his work. He had employed his time since we saw him in rigging up all the rods; and

we were in a few minutes in the punt and on the 'four hundred acres of water,' making for the 'pitch' on which Dick had decided for our first essay.

As soon as we arrived at the 'pitch' we were baited, and throwing over at the same moment, the usual bet was made on the first fish. Useless! We were in the boat together. Another bait; and the same result. Dick said they were on the feed; and so they were, like cormorants. I told our limping friend of my sad forebodings about the pike; and he said I was right, he feared, but that we should catch plenty of perch and roach. Nevertheless, we could try. And as soon as a couple of the latter, nearly half a pound weight, had been caught, Dick made a throw of about fifty yards of line in a style which would have delighted any angler's heart.

Our bait was a singular kind of brown grub, very tough; so tough, that frequently we caught two or three fish with the same bait. I asked Dick where he got them, and he told me, 'Providence sent the perch, and Providence sent the bait to catch them;' for the bait was procured by merely turning the sod on the banks of the water.

But it was six o'clock, and time to give over. And what was the number of our fish? Two hundred and eighty perch and roach off two rods, in three hours. Think of this, ye Thames fishers, who rejoice, as may so often be seen by the reporters of the Thames, over their 'half-a-dozen nice perch' as the result of their day. What was the weight of them? Why, some large, some small (not very small, though, for those we returned at once), averaging half a pound.

Did we dine joyously after this success? Well, we should have done; but we had to mourn with those who mourned, and weep with those who wept. Dick did not tell us about it. He didn't want, as new-comers, to spoil our sport. But that pagoda in front of our window contained what a short time before was in itself beautiful as youth and strength and intellect could make it; that which was dear to a parent's heart; that which was very, very dear to youth and beauty. He had come down at the beginning of that week as full of health and spirits as ourselves. He was at the porch of the Sands Hotel, laughing and joking, where laughs and jokes have been made night after night, so merrily. That beautiful moon, which we had contemplated as it reflected itself on the rippling waters of the Dart, had shone also on the ocean, and had tempted him, in the exuberance of youthful spirit, to a swim by its light. Vain the attempt to dissuade him. With two of his companions he went down to the beach, and while they sat on the shingle he undressed and plunged into the sea. Swimming in front of them, they saw his face in the moonlight. Suddenly a call, 'I am drowning!' But they knew he was a good swimmer and thought it was a joke. They saw the face pass away from the light of the moon into shadow,

and the friends chatted together on the shingle. But a quarter of an hour elapsed and no sound of their friend. They were alarmed—aroused the whole hotel—aroused the fishermen, the boatmen of the beach. All in vain. The body was found next day at 'Start Point,' and was brought to repose in the pagoda till it could be removed to its last resting-place in the great metropolis.

The sun shone gloriously over the sea the next morning, when we were to have a whole day with the perch. While we were at breakfast Dick was on the alert, and we were soon on the chosen spot. 'On the feed' appeared to be the normal condition of the fish at Slapton. As soon as we had fastened the punt the perch were again 'two in the boat,' until the midday sun came down so determinately, that we were glad to land and take our luncheon under the shade of the wide-spreading woods on the western side of the water.

It was strange, as we sat here after luncheon, to look across the placid water and listen to the roar of the waves as they broke restlessly upon the beach; stranger still, inland as we appeared to be, to see passing before us a stately man-of-war on its way to Plymouth, telling of the depth as well as breadth of the ocean before us.

Dick here appeared, to tell us what, while hauling up the perch so rapidly, we could not wait to hear. The water in which we were fishing, and all the lands round about, are the property of Sir Lydston Newman, who kindly allows fishing to those staying at the Sands Hotel from the 1st of May to the 31st of October. When we suggested that some days in the cold winter months must be the grandest for the pike, he told us that Sir Lydston, after the fishing season was over, had large parties for shooting the wild fowl, which were here in enormous numbers, and that although the fishing was so free, not a gun was allowed on any pretence to be fired on the estate. Later on in the afternoon we saw the waterfowl congregated by thousands on the southern end of the water.

And now it was time to resume the day's fishing which we had so auspiciously commenced. All the afternoon perch and roach came tumbling in, and 'two in the boat' was the constant cry. Our score had reached 297 when it was six o'clock, and at that moment, in landing a fish, my friend's hook broke off. Dick was at once prepared with another; but my friend had had enough of the perch, and declared that he should leave to me the catching of the three more to make 300. This was done in a few minutes, and so ended our second day's sport.

It is curious to note how soon the most cosmopolitan mind becomes, in an isolated spot, absorbed by events which, in the metropolis, would have had a passing thought, and then, not in the proverbial *nine days*, but even in less than nine hours, have be-

come lost in the whirlpool of London life. It was not surprising that among the few who came down from the village of Slapton the catastrophe we have related should have formed the staple of conversation, or that the special surroundings of the hotel should have been rife with the subject. But the rooms were occupied entirely by Londoners, and the unhappy event had taken as morbid a hold on them as if they had been villagers all their life. Even on this Saturday night it was the topic of gloomy conversation. The last jokes which were uttered under the little porch on the fatal evening, and even the mode of transit of the corpse to London, were dwelt upon with such a relish for the minutest details as would have done credit to a countryman born.

The next day being Sunday we went to the little village church of Slapton, where an inferential reference was made in the sermon, while No. 191 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (which had found their way even to Slapton) showed that the whole village was impressed with the event.

The sun was blazing as we left the church and walked through the grotesque little village. I particularly mention this for the benefit of my fishing friends, that they may not place so much trust in an August sun as to leave all their warm clothing behind when they visit Slapton. The changes are great and sudden on this coast, and whereas we had worn our lightest clothing to church, by three o'clock such a cold wind was blowing as made our greatcoats very comfortable.

I have already spoken of the more than civility we experienced from mine host, and the following circumstance is worth mentioning:

Important letters had reached us from London that morning, and we had very distastefully, but dutifully, answered them, when, on giving them to our attendant for post, she replied, 'La, sir, there's no post from here on Sundays!' We expressed our disappointment, and remarked on the consequence of the letters getting to post that day. She made no reply then, but shortly afterwards returned with a smiling countenance, saying, 'Master would send a man over with them to Dartmouth.' Now Dartmouth is seven miles from 'the Sands,' and the reader will feel the same surprise that we did when he hears that the landlord absolutely refused to receive any payment for this important and special service.

We were just off to bed when we heard an altercation at the front door, caused by the landlord's forcible detention of a young gentleman staying in the hotel, who avowed his determination to go down and have a swim by the light of the moon. He could hardly be said to have been dissuaded from his purpose; for the landlord declared that if he persisted he would lock him up in his own room, for he was not going to have two inquests in one week in his house.

The next morning saw us, by ten o'clock, with all our tackle ready for the perch. It was a cold, blustering, mizzling morning, and as we reached our fishing-station we were glad to wrap ourselves well up in our Cording's Waterproof Dreadnoughts. But the perch were as sulky this morning as they had been lively on Saturday. It was necessary for us to give up fishing by half-past two that day, as we were to leave for Dartmouth after an early dinner, and we began to fancy that we should have a blank morning. 'No,' said Dick, in reply to our repeated asseverations that the perch were off the feed; 'no, sir; the sun will burn down the wind, and then they'll be all right again.' And so it was. As the sun rose over the hills, and came, as Dick said, 'athert the wind,' it did 'burn it down.'

Phcebus was at length triumphant; a genial warmth came over the atmosphere, and coats were off and fishing began in earnest. It seemed as though all the perch had just determined to sit down to breakfast. The bait was scarcely in the water before there was a bite and a fish in the boat. This went on as fast as it was possible to haul up, till at half-past two we gave over, and counted our fish. Mind, it was barely four hours and a half, and yet our take off two lines was 332, making, with our Friday and Saturday's score, 912 fish in little more than twelve hours, or 720 minutes.

Leaving Dick to bring on the punt and tackle, we landed, and took a sharp walk home on the top of the beach. On nearing the hotel we saw a crowd of people running hither and thither, and as they parted a horse was making its way from the waves, and struggling to get on the beach. A farmer, whose mind was full of the event of the previous week, went down on horseback to seek the spot where the body disappeared. Having approached too near, one of the big waves which come in so suddenly on this coast enveloped man and horse, and took them back, as it receded, into deep water. The farmer was thrown, but fortunately held the rein in his hands, by which he was dragged forcibly on shore by his faithful friend, who stood shivering on the beach, looking alternately at the waves and its prostrate master. Poor landlord of the Sands! as he handed the farmer a glass of hot brandy-and-water his usual happy spirits appeared almost to give way, and with a rueful countenance he declared he thought all the people had gone mad thereabouts; but he did hope everybody else would keep away from the beach and let the matter be forgotten.

In spite of this drawback, however, our visit to the Sands was a happy one. Piscatorially, it was wonderfully successful. Although our experience was confined to the smaller race of fish, we had ocular evidence of what might have been our success when we saw a pike about a yard long floating, and, we must say, unpleasantly floating, in an advanced state of decomposition, and another in the hotel well stuffed and mounted, labelled as weighing 38lbs. The

quantity of fish—roach, perch, and pike—in this water is astonishing. Fishing goes on all the summer, year after year, but with no sensible diminution in their numbers; and it seems there is no accounting for this wonderful prolificness of the fish, except that they live continually at the sea-side.

As we rose the hill on our way to Dartmouth, we could not help looking back with a longing eye upon water which we knew to be filled with pike; and we now solace ourselves with the hope of paying Slapton another visit, especially as we remember that our bill was wonderfully economical; although we had unexceptionable accommodation, excellent living, unbounded attention, and all the comfort of home. To any one in want of a quiet week, with a love of beautiful scenery, and fishing to be remembered for a lifetime, we say, go to Slapton Lea!

HENRY LAKE.

THREE TO ONE

Or some Passages out of the Life of Amicia Lady Sweetapple

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE'

CHAPTER XLII. LORD PENNYROYAL ON DEBTS AND WASHING.

'You know, of course,' said Harry to Edward, 'we can't give any explanation of this matter. It would look like puffing ourselves, if we said we supported this poor family.'

'Of course we can't,' said Edward. 'Besides, there is no knowing what Mrs. Marjoram would make out of the story. She would only remember half of it, forgetting all the good. We should never hear the last of it.'

'All right, then,' said Harry. 'Recollect, if any one asks you about E. P., you know nothing about what E. P. means.'

So the two friends made their appearance in the drawing-room.

'I am so very sorry that you are both going to leave us so soon,' said Lady Carlton, remembering that conversation with Sir Thomas in his somnolent state the night before, when she had settled so much. 'But I suppose it cannot be helped.'

'I am sorry to say it cannot,' said Harry Fortescue.

'Couldn't one of you stay?' said Lady Carlton. 'Why shouldn't you stay, Mr. Vernon; some of us will miss you so very much?'

'I am afraid I must go with Harry,' said Edward Vernon.

'And when shall we see you again?' asked Lady Carlton.

'I am sure I don't know,' said Harry. 'All I know of our movements is, that we are going to Ascot, to Lady Charity's, for the races.'

'After that,' said Edward, 'there is a Queen's ball, to which we are both invited.'

'Are you both going to Ascot?' asked Alice, who listened in repudiation.

'As for that,' said Harry, 'my mind is made up. I sha'n't go to Ascot unless Edward is asked too. Here he is, standing by me, like a good fellow, and going up to town with me, because he sees I am annoyed, and I sha'n't leave him in London alone while I go to the races.'

'I daresay,' said Lady Sweetapple, who sat there listening as mute as a mouse, 'that I can persuade Lady Charity to ask Mr.

Vernon as well. If you will call on me on Tuesday morning, you will find it all arranged.'

'I am so sorry you are annoyed by that advertisement, Mr. Fortescue,' said Lady Carlton. 'This E. P. seems a very troublesome person.'

'Not at all,' said Harry shortly. 'I can understand the advertisement very well.'

'I do not understand why he cannot wait for his money till you return to town.'

This was a good stroke of Lady Carlton to suppose that E. P. stood for a man. It was a draw, in fact, to find out if E. P. were a man or a woman. But Harry was equal to the occasion.

'The person who inserted that advertisement,' he said, 'would not have put it into the papers unless it had been absolutely necessary.'

'Why can't you stay here and send him the cheque?' said Florry, who did not wish Harry Fortescue to escape.

'Perhaps he can't wait,' said Amicia.

'I have already said I must go up to town. I ought to have gone away by the first train, only it seemed hardly polite to rush off with our breakfast in our throats from a house where we have been so kindly treated. But after luncheon go we must, and so there is no use discussing the matter any more.'

With these words Harry Fortescue rose and went out with Edward to have a smoke on the terrace. Like the ancient Persians, who first discussed matters sober, and then when they were intoxicated, Harry and Edward thought the safest counsel was that taken after a pipe, when it had been preceded by a smokeless deliberation.

'They are very curious about E. P.,' said Harry, after he had puffed a little.

'It looks like it,' said Edward. 'I can't help thinking these girls have got something in their heads about Edith Price, and have told their mother.'

'Lady Sweetapple thinks E. P. is a man,' said Harry. 'You heard what she said about Edward Price at breakfast—though even then the "Price" gave me a turn—and what she said just now about his not waiting.'

'I don't care so much about what Lady Sweetapple thinks,' said Edward sadly, 'as what Alice thinks. I am afraid I have lost all chance with her now.'

'I don't see it at all,' said Harry. 'Why in the world should you lose your chance with a girl because E. P. puts an advertisement into the *Times* which I have acknowledged is intended for me?'

'Women are strange things, you know, Harry,' said Edward. 'I am as sure as I stand here that Alice Carlton thinks E. P. is a woman, and that I am in some way or other mixed up with her.'

'Let her think, then,' said Harry. 'I don't like girls who think; they ought to love and trust and never to think; for thought means doubt, and a doubting girl, what good is she to any one? Marry her, and you'll find her another Mrs. Marjoram. You ought to be glad, Edward, instead of moping. This absurd mess about poor Edith is what the same Mrs. Marjoram, or Mother Marjoram, as I should call her, would say was a trial or a cross, wisely ordained in order that you may see whether Alice Carlton is worth having. Come away with me, like a man, and offer no explanations. When we meet them at Ascot they will have forgotten all about Edith Price, and you can renew your attentions.'

'But do you think they will come to Ascot?' asked Edward doubtfully.

'Come? of course they will,' said Harry. 'I'm not very rich, Edward, as you know; but I will bet you a new hat—not one of old Pennyroyal's cheap bargains, but a brand-new Lincoln and Bennet, or Pretiou's, whichever you please—that we see Florry and Alice Carlton at Ascot.'

'I only hope we may,' said Edward, 'but I feel as if I were seeing Alice for the last time.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' said Harry. 'And now let us look after the men; we have had enough of the ladies for the present. I dare say we shall find them in the lime avenue, in the shade.'

To the avenue they went, and there they met all the men, even down to Mr. Marjoram, who had escaped, for that morning at least, from Mrs. Marjoram, the *Whole Duty of Man*, and the Homilies.

'We thought you were lost,' said Sir Thomas, looking pleasantly at the young men whom he had settled over-night should be his sons-in-law, if they only had courage to ask for his daughters. 'Are you both really going? I hope not.'

'We must go,' said Harry; 'it can't be helped—'

'It's just what I said,' whispered Lord Pennyroyal to Sir Thomas; 'it's all debt—a joint bill which they have both accepted. That's why they are obliged to run away to town to meet it.'

Mr. Beeswing was as genial as ever. 'This is a new sensation,' he said. 'It is the first time I ever was in the same house with a man who has been advertised for in the second column of the *Times*. And then, how good of you to confess that you were the man who is wanted! Now you would never have done that if you had been married.'

'Why not?' asked Mr. Marjoram.

'Let us put a case,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Suppose you, Mr. Marjoram, had run away from Mrs. Marjoram, and she had put in his advertisement. Would you answer it?'

'Let us hear what it is,' said Mr. Marjoram.

'It is not very long,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Here it is, from memory: "Mr. M.—If you don't come back, you may as well send back the key of the tea-caddy."''

'I should never leave Mrs. Marjoram,' said Mr. Marjoram solemnly.

'I know you would not,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Nor,' said Mr. Marjoram, 'if I did run away from her—were such a thing possible—I could never carry away the key of the tea-caddy, for Mrs. Marjoram always keeps it.'

'And very wisely too,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'Talk of the ruin to health by smoking and intoxication; there is nothing so destructive as strong tea. All wise wives, therefore, clutch the key of the tea-caddy, while they abandon the cellar key to their husbands.'

'I suppose these advertisements in the second column of the *Times* are very expensive,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'I wonder now what E. P. paid for his?'

'All secret and nameless things are expensive,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'We all know that Anonymas are very costly; and so I suppose is Anonymus, when he takes to advertising. What would you say, Lord Pennyroyal, to this advertisement, also from that second column? "F. R. S.—Declined with thanks, since you found my terms too high. Espionage is a luxury which ought only to be within the reach of those who can afford to pay sufficiently well for the skill and discernment required."''

'I hope I should never have anything to do with anonymous advertisements,' said Lord Pennyroyal; 'and still less with espionage, even if I could afford to pay the terms which this advertiser seems to demand.'

'Afford to pay!' whispered Mr. Beeswing to Mr. Marjoram. 'Is not that too good a joke? As if there was any sum that he could not afford to pay!'

But Lord Pennyroyal was now mounted on one of his hobbies, and it was impossible to unhorse him.

'Debt,' he began, 'is the ruin of half the young men of the country. It is a horrid phantom—'

'There needs no ghost rise up to tell us that,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Mr. Beeswing,' said Lord Pennyroyal with great asperity, 'this is no joking matter. I say debt is a horrid phantom.'

'It is a horrid bore, especially to younger sons; and one younger son, of the House of Port, whom I forbear to name,' said Mr. Beeswing.

But Lord Pennyroyal went on in spite of the laughter which Mr. Beeswing had provoked.

'I say it is a horrid phantom. It stalks through the land, and shows its hideous head everywhere. It invades the peace of families, robs parents of their sleep, cuts off estates in tail—'

'Why, then, it shows that it has a tail as well as a head,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Do not interrupt me by a very poor joke,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'Debt is sapping the strength and weakening the sinews of the land. You find it everywhere and in all ranks. It is rampant in the highest places.'

'How could we get on without debt?' asked Mr. Beeswing. 'Would you be like that man who thanked God that he never put a morsel of food into his mouth that was not already paid for?'

'I would,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'If I could manage it, there could be no weekly bills, no bills at all, in fact; everything should be paid for in ready money.'

'Then I know many people who would starve,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'It would serve them right,' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'Life would be too great a trouble,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'It would not be worth living in that hand-to-mouth way. Besides, the tradesmen would not like it. They are men and brothers and creditors; we are bound to respect their feelings.'

'Of course they like it,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'That's the way they charge double for everything. Once let them get a young man in debt, and they fleece him as they like.'

'I don't think young men are such fools as you think,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'You can't deny that many young men of your acquaintance have gone to rack and ruin through debt,' said Lord Pennyroyal, speaking sternly at Mr. Beeswing.

'Of course I can't,' said Mr. Beeswing; 'but I think I can tell you why one half of them ever got into debt at all, and so were ruined. It was all the fault of their fathers, who were able to afford it, and it would make them no proper allowance.'

This was a shot between wind and water for Lord Pennyroyal; for as you all know, it was notorious that Rosemary could only make both ends meet by giving Lord Pennyroyal what he called a 'facer,' the shape of 20,000*l.*, every now and then.

'Of course a man ought to make his son a proper allowance,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'But then the question arises, what is a proper allowance?'

'That is easily answered,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'A son—I mean an elder son, and not one of those detrimental younger sons whom prudent mothers call *pures pertes*—an elder son ought to have such an allowance as will enable him to live up to the station which he may be expected to fill hereafter. It ought too to be such an allowance as will allow him to marry in his father's lifetime, else what becomes of the chance of succession?'

'I don't see,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'why you should not make

him his own father at once, and put him into possession of the estate. No property could bear such an elder son.'

'Well,' said Mr. Beeswing, 'there's a good deal of truth in what you say. Very sensible are some of the savage tribes. They do not allow a father to live beyond a certain time, and that not such an advanced age either. When that period of existence has arrived, the friends of the owner of the family property—his eldest son of course being what would be called in England chief mourner—assemble at the dwelling of the envied tenant in tail, and politely inform him that by the custom of the country his last hour has come. Then they kill and eat him on the spot, and the heir takes seisin of his property by banqueting on his father. How would you like that to be the custom of Rosemary Manor?'

'This is a civilised and not a savage land,' said Lord Pennyroyal proudly. 'I wonder what the expectation of life of those savages is, and how Mr. Gladstone would calculate the nature of the succession or devolution of their property?'

'That, you know, is contingent on the deglutition of their parent,' said Mr. Beeswing.

'Are there any statistics on the matter?' asked Lord Pennyroyal. 'I will mention the matter at the next meeting of the Statistical Society.'

'The great Dr. Decimal,' said Mr. Beeswing very seriously, 'always declared that the expectation of life among savages was greater than that of your civilised countries. He had tables to prove that, if a savage were not eaten up by a lion, or his own friends, or killed in battle, he would outlive any civilised man; and that was how he accounted for the curious custom as to succession which he found to exist among some tribes in the islands of the South Pacific, and to which I have called your attention.'

'I will consider the matter,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'But as I have exhausted the subject of debt, I wish to say a few words on another bad habit.'

'And pray what is that?' asked Mr. Beeswing with an air of mock attention.

'Washing,' said Lord Pennyroyal.

'Washing!' exclaimed Mr. Beeswing. 'You mean washing-bills, I presume?'

'No doubt,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'washing-bills, like all bills, are a curse to the community; nor is there any doubt that we do not wear our shirts half long enough; but that is not what I meant. I meant by washing, the act of washing.'

'It costs something for soap,' said Mr. Beeswing tentatively.

'It does,' said Lord Pennyroyal; 'soap, as well as blacking, is a large item of expense in a household, young men and servants waste it so wilfully. But I rather had in view the effect of the act

of washing on the youth of the present age, and the degeneracy to which the abuse of washing leads.'

'In what way?' said Mr. Beeswing.

'I have no doubt,' said Lord Pennyroyal, who had now mounted another hobby, 'that nine-tenths of the disease in the world is caused by over-washing. Our forefathers, and in present times those very savages of whom you speak, were and are what we should call very dirty people. They scarcely ever washed or wash. Some tribes confessedly have no soap, and make use of sand as a substitute. Were they, or are they, less strong than the civilised man and woman of this generation? Every one must admit that they were far stronger; able to bear much greater privation; and that they were altogether a far harder race. This, I say, chiefly comes from washing. What is done to a child as soon as he is born? The nurses seize it and wash it—'

'That,' said Mr. Beeswing, breaking in, 'is invariably the custom with all races. They all wash their children when they are born.'

'I am not prepared to contradict you on that point,' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'Perhaps you are right; but if I grant that first immersion, there you must stop. It is very little washing that the son of a savage gets, or that the son of an Englishman, I will not say in the Middle Ages, but even so lately as the last generation, got. True, his face and hands were washed twice a day, and rubbed red with a rough towel. Once a week he was washed all over perhaps; that was all; and so he grew up to be a stout, strong, healthy man. What is the case now? As an infant he is washed at birth, and from that day forth he is incessantly washed all over twice or three times a day, now in hot water, now in cold. He is soaped and rubbed and scrubbed as though he were a negro, and it were a matter of life and death to wash him white. So it goes on, from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to manhood. At home, at school, and at the university, it is still the same. Wash, wash, wash; rub, scrub, and scrub, rub, till a lad's constitution is washed out of him, and he is fit for nothing. As if that were not enough, he is sometimes recommended to try a Turkish bath. All nonsense! This washing is all a needless source of expense, besides undermining the constitution. In my young days we never washed, and I am sure in my old age I am all the better for it. Look at Rosemary, I declare he is not so strong as I am. I remember very well when he was at Eton they sent me a long bill for wash-balls and soap and Baden towels from a perfumer. I'll be bound he has spent ten times as much as I have in soap in all my life, though I am at least thirty years older than he is. Washing and debt, you may depend on it, are the two evils of the age.'

'What a nasty old fellow!' said Edward to Harry. 'I wonder if he allows tubs and tubbing at Rosemary Manor?'

'I daresay,' said Lord Pennyroyal, addressing himself both to Harry and Edward, 'I daresay you young men are both in debt, and wash yourselves all over twice a day.'

'I don't understand what you mean by being in debt,' said Harry. 'If you mean that I owe some money to my tradesmen, I am in debt, and I hope never to be otherwise; but if you mean that I cannot pay my way, or contract debts without the prospect of paying them, then I am not at all in debt. As for the washing, I plead guilty to washing myself all over twice a day, or three times even, so long as this weather lasts. Once a day all over in winter, and twice in summer, that's my rule; and I hope if I ever have the honour of visiting you at Rosemary Manor, that you will allow me the privilege of a tub.'

'My sentiments are the same as Harry's,' said Edward. 'So long as we live like civilised beings, debts, and washing all over at least once a day, are matters of necessity.'

'There!' said Lord Pennyroyal. 'It just comes to what I said. Debt and washing are the great evils of the age.'

'No one is beyond his age,' said Harry. 'This is my age, and I live in it, very happily, as it seems to me.'

'In spite of E. P.?' said Sir Thomas Carlton.

'Yes, in spite of E. P.,' said Harry Fortescue, laughing.

'What a hardened young man,' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'to make a jest of an evident bill transaction! I shouldn't wonder if it was for money lost at the last Derby.'

'The laugh sounded to me very like that of an innocent man,' said Sir Thomas. 'After all, I don't believe there is anything so very dreadful hidden under those initials.'

'Nor do I,' said Mr. Beeswing. 'I have known Harry Fortescue a very long time—ever since he was that high,' holding up his hand to the level of his waist—'and I am sure there is no harm either in him or in Edward Vernon. They are very clever fellows, too; Harry the cleverest for choice. Their only fault is, that, like the Honourable Edward Beeswing, they are cursed with a competence. That, to my mind, and neither washing nor debt, is the greatest evil of the age.'

'Ah!' said Lord Pennyroyal, 'I see we shall never agree on first principles, and so I won't argue the matter any longer with you; but I am well content to have stated my views at length, and I certainly will not fail to submit that question as to the expectation of life among savages to the consideration of the Statistical Society.'

'I say, Harry,' said Edward, 'this is rather dull work. I suppose there's no time for another smoke before luncheon?'

'Alas, no!' said Harry. 'There goes the gong, and now we shall have to face the ladies again.'

CHAPTER XLIII.

HARRY AND EDWARD LEAVE HIGH BEECH.

LUNCHEON came and went, and they were all very sad and soon. That horrid advertisement hung over them all, and even Lady Sweetapple, much as she exulted in the success of her schemes, at the shadow of that dark young lady in the background projected over her.

But with Florry and Alice it was far otherwise. To them it seemed that they were about to lose both their lovers for ever; and for Florry, when she heard Amicia propose that Harry and Edward should call on her on Tuesday, when they would find it settled that Edward Vernon should accompany Harry Fortescue to Ascot races, she felt as if the end of the world were come. Now, as at the end of the world all things and secrets will be revealed, Florry felt as though her promise to Lady Sweetapple no longer existed, and she would have told her mother all she knew about Edith Price, but she thought that it would do no good, but only make matters worse for Harry. 'If he would only speak a word about it, if he could only say something to give me an opening for an explanation, that I might make an excuse for him to mamma, I might do something; and first of all I would forgive him, if there is anything to forgive, for I don't believe a word of what Lady Sweetapple says about Edith Price. Only there she stands, a spectre at our feast; and until she is laid, we none of us can speak.'

So she thought, and so Alice thought, only substituting Edward for Harry; and there they sat tongue-tied, the one looking at Harry, the other at Edward, as though they could never have their full interest in them. As soon as the melancholy meal was over, the carriage was ordered to take the two friends to the station, and, if possible, Florry and Alice felt worse than ever. Nor was Edward Vernon particularly happy. Of the two, he looked much more like culprit than Harry.

'I must say,' said Mrs. Marjoram to Lady Carlton, 'that Mr. Fortescue does brazen it out well.'

'Perhaps he has nothing to brazen out,' said Lady Carlton.

Come what would, Alice Carlton was resolved to have one word with her lover before he went. Florry was not so excited, but she was just as determined. She sent Alice off into the conservatory, and told her mother, 'Alice and I are going to give Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon a bouquet each before they go, so pray send them to us in the conservatory when they come down.'

Some mothers might have stopped such a proceeding. Half a century ago no mother would have countenanced it; but 1870 is not

half a century ago, fortunately for us, and equally fortunate it is that few mothers are so severe as they were in 1820 on their daughters. The consequence is, there is less Gretna Green and more confidence between parent and child.

Besides, you all know that this double marriage was very much after Lady Carlton's heart, and she thought if there was anything to explain the young people had better explain it to one another. If going into the conservatory only ended in a bouquet, well and good; no harm would be done. If it ended in one wedding or in two, so much the better. She was sure both of her own consent and her husband's, and only wished her daughters to please themselves. Happy would it be if all mothers were as considerate as Lady Carlton, and, let us add, if all fathers were so well off as to afford to marry their daughters to nice young men with only a competence.

So when Harry and Edward came down ready to take leave, Lady Carlton said, 'Before you take leave of us here, Florry and Alice wish to see you in the conservatory.'

Edward Vernon's heart jumped quite up into his mouth when he heard this. If he had not had a very fine set of teeth, we believe it would have jumped quite out; but as it was it fell back again, and he could only say,

'How very nice!'

'Come along,' said Harry, who in his practical way knew there was no time to lose, for he already heard the carriage wheels crushing the gravel.

Off they went then, without another word, except that on the way to the conservatory Harry said to Edward,

'Mind, no explanations about Edith or E. P.; we should both look like fools.'

When they reached the conservatory they found Florry at one end, gathering her bouquet, and Alice at the other, gathering hers.

'Here, Mr. Fortescue,' cried Florry, whose quick ears had also heard the carriage, and dreaded lest old Podager should crawl in like a snail and disturb their interview. 'Come here, I want you.'

'Here I am,' said Harry, and in an instant he stood at her side.

'Harry,' said Florry—it was the first time she had ever called him Harry—'Harry, do tell me all about E. P.'

'I am sorry I can't,' said Harry.

'Won't you, dear Mr. Fortescue?' said Florry. And then she went on, 'And so you really will not tell me anything about her?'

'I shall say nothing,' said Harry.

'Then you sha'n't have this bouquet,' said Florry, throwing it on the ground and stamping on it. 'There, it is crushed, like something else which you do not value. But stay, shall I tell you who E. P. is?'

'You cannot know,' said Harry.

'Edith Price,' said Florry. 'And now be off! leave my sight! But no; you were to have a bouquet. Take these flowers.' As she said this she snatched a few at random. 'I told mamma you were to have a bouquet, and now you have it. Go!'

Harry turned and left her, and as he left the conservatory Edward overtook him.

He too had had an explanation of a less stormy kind with Alice; but that was love, and we hold that love scenes, when smooth, belong only to lovers themselves. All that Edward knew was that Alice loved him and that he loved her. At the very last she had faltered out something about E. P. She had not dared to mention Price, but he only pressed her hand more tenderly and said, 'Dearest, I cannot tell you yet. One day you will know all about this mystery.'

Then he took his bouquet, and was gone, and the two girls were left alone in the conservatory.

In a few more minutes Harry Fortescue had bidden good-bye to Lady Carlton and her visitors; Sir Thomas and Lord Pennyroyal had gone out directly after luncheon to look at the sugar-beet; but all the rest were there—Lady Pennyroyal, Mr. and Mrs. Marjoram, the kindly Barkers, Count Pantouffles, and though last, not least, Lady Sweetapple.

The last words that Harry Fortescue heard in that house were uttered by Amicia.

'Remember, Mr. Fortescue, you are to come to see me on Tuesday next, in Lowndes-street.'

Then Harry and Edward jumped into the break, which carried them and their portmanteaus, and amid many bows from Mr. Podager they drove off to the station, and High Beech saw them no more.

Harry Fortescue had a very good temper, but it must be owned he was a little ruffled by Florry's behaviour.

'How did you get on, Ned?' he said turning to Edward Vernon. 'What a nice bouquet! That I call worth carrying away. Only look at mine, a mere handful, clutched anyhow. How did you part from Alice?'

'Very nicely,' said Edward. 'She is the dearest creature in the world. I gave no explanations.'

'Nor did I,' said Harry; 'but it cost me a quarrel with the only girl I ever thought worth looking at. I am afraid Florry Carlton is a vixen. And do you know, Edward, I don't know how she found it out, but she knows E. P. means Edith Price, and was ready to scratch my eyes out because I would give her no explanations.'

'How can she know it?' said Edward.

'How can I tell?' said Harry. 'But, taking it all together—the loss of the cheque, and Edith's advertisement, and Florry's finding out the name—I am sure there has been foul play somewhere.'

'I daresay it will all be cleared up some day,' said Edward, who

was supremely happy after his interview with Alice. 'And now let us have a weed before we get to the station.'

So the two smoked away till the train came up, and in an hour they found themselves at Victoria Station.

'We had better first go to Mrs. Boffin's,' said Harry, 'and get rid of our things, and then I will run over to Lupus-street, and see Edith, and give her another cheque. Perhaps she may be able to clear up the mystery.'

'Just what I was thinking,' said Edward; 'and then we can dine at the club, and go to the opera afterwards.'

So they drove to Mrs. Boffin's, and were received by that worthy woman with all the honour befitting such good lodgers.

'Glad to see you both back, looking so well,' said that virtuous dragon. 'Would you like to have anything got in for dinner?'

'No, thanks,' said Edward; 'we shall dine out to-day and to-morrow. Has anything happened since we have been away?'

'Nothing at all,' said Mrs. Boffin. 'There are some letters for both of you.'

'Has no one called?' asked Harry.

'Only three or four gentlemen, who left their cards,' said Mrs. Boffin. And then, recollecting herself, she said, 'O yes, yesterday a very forward young person called and wanted to have your address, Mr. Fortescue, which I refused to give her, as was proper. Think of me giving your address to any such person! But she got nothing out of me, for I would not even tell her that you lived here.'

'What did she look like?' asked Harry.

'O, for the matter of looks, she had none that I saw,' said Mrs. Boffin. 'She was very dark was that young person, that's all I know, and had a very downcast, modest way of speaking. But, Lord bless you, Mr. Fortescue, I'm too old to be taken in in that way by any dark young person.'

'It was Edith, I'll lay my life,' said Harry to Edward. 'Poor thing, she came to find our address and was refused, and that was why she put that advertisement into the paper.'

'O dear me, Mr. Fortescue,' said Mrs. Boffin, who saw that she had made a mistake, 'if I had only a known that dark young lady—she was not 'person' now—'was a friend of yours, I'd have gone through fire and water to serve her. But how could I know?'

'It's very provoking,' said Harry. 'I do hope you were civil to the young lady, Mrs. Boffin, for she is a very great friend both of mine and Mr. Vernon's, and so is her mother.'

'O dear!' said Mrs. Boffin, putting her hands into her apron pockets, 'if I had only a known she were a friend of yours! As to civil, is there ever a person, high or low, as can say that Jane Boffin were uncivil to them? No! I knows my place too well, and what is due both to myself and others. I was only firm to the young lady,

whose business I could not know. "Jane," said Mr. Boffin that was, but is now gone to a better and a cooler place, "Jane, whatever you do, treat every one with civility. What says the Bible about entertaining angels unawares?" And really, I am sure that dark young lady looked ready to drop.'

'Then of course you asked her in to sit down and rest,' said Edward.

'Not if I knows it, Mr. Vernon,' said Mrs. Boffin, the lodging-house keeper overcoming the good Samaritan in her bosom. 'Not if I knows it. I ask a strange young person into the house, and ask her to sit down! Another thing that Mr. Boffin said before he departed was, "Jane, whenever your lodgers is out, let nobody into the 'ouse. Never give anything away, and then you'll have more left for yourself. When the lodgers is out, keep the door on the latch; as soon as they are in, put on the chain. Put the gas out yourself, and then say your prayers and go to bed, and ask no questions of the lodgers." Ask a strange young person into the 'ouse! Why, she might have run away with all your candles, to say nothing of your tea and sugar.'

'Well,' said Harry, wishing to stop the interminable Mrs. Boffin, 'the long and the short is, you did not ask this young lady in, and she went away without getting our address. That was what it all came to.'

'That was just about it,' said Mrs. Boffin, with a curtsey, 'and I hope, gentlemen, that I gives you every satisfaction.'

'Yes, yes,' said Harry. 'Now leave us, Mrs. Boffin.'

'Certainly, Mr. Fortescue,' said Mrs. Boffin; and that virago vanished, only to hold up her hands as soon as she reached the ground-floor, and to exclaim:

'To think, after all, that dark young person were really a friend of both my gentlemen! What an artful designing creature she must be, and how I pities her poor mother, which it serves her right, for she ought to a-brought her up better than to come asking after young gentlemen's addresses.' Having uttered these words, Mrs. Boffin descended to the kitchen and had her tea.

'What a stupid old woman!' said Harry. 'If she had given Edith the address, which I took the pains to write out so big that a charity child of six might have read it, Edith would never have inserted that advertisement, and we should have been spared all this bother about E. P. But it's no use fretting about it any more. We must look on it as spilt milk, and forget it. What I have next to do is to run over to Lupus-street and give Edith another cheque.'

Suiting the action to the word, Harry Fortescue opened the inevitable bag and drew out his cheque-book.

'There,' he said, 'Messrs. Twining will honour that, and I will write them a line, cancelling the lost one, if it be really lost. And

now to set Edith's mind at rest and my own about the cheque. Good-bye, old fellow ; I shall be back in no time.'

'I will stay till you come,' said Edward ; and the next minute Harry Fortescue was tearing along Eccleston-street, where Mrs. Boffin dwelt, on his way to Lupus-street, where he arrived at No. — in very little time, but, it must be added, with very little breath.

CHAPTER XLIV.

HARRY AND EDWARD AND THE PRICES.

It was about five o'clock when Harry Fortescue got to No. — Lupus-street, and the door was opened by Mrs. Nicholson, who was afraid lest her good-for-nothing husband might repeat his raid of the day before, and try to carry off her week's rent as well as 'the bank.'

It so happened that Harry had hardly ever been at the house before. The Prices had not been long there, and Harry and Edward were too well-bred to weary those whom they befriended with the burden of their presence. It also happened that when Harry had called, Betsy had answered the door. When Mrs. Nicholson saw a very good-looking young gentleman standing at her door, she thought it must be a mistake, and said,

'Do you want anything, sir ?'

'I want to see Miss Price,' said Harry ; 'is she at home ?'

'Miss Price ? Yes, sir, Miss Price is at home. May I be so bold as to ask you for your name ?'

'My name does not matter,' said Harry.

'Perhaps not to you, sir,' said Mrs. Nicholson ; 'but it does to me. You must give me your name.'

'I want it for myself,' said Harry, laughing. 'Will you go up and tell Miss Price that a gentleman wishes to see her ?'

'Certainly, sir,' said Mrs. Nicholson ; and then she scaled the staircase, and repeated to Edith the words which Harry had said.

'A gentleman !' said Edith. 'You know, Mrs. Nicholson, we see no gentlemen.'

'That's what I thought, Miss Edith,' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'and I told him as much ; but he seems of that kind as won't take an answer.'

'Every gentleman,' said Edith, 'ought to have a card ; and if he has no card, he must have a name.'

'Just what I said, Miss Edith. I begged him to give me his name ; and what do you think he said ? Why, that he wanted it for himself, in such a pleasant way.'

'Please go down and tell him,' said Edith, 'that I expect visits from no gentlemen. If he is a gentleman he must tell his name, and then I shall be able to say whether I know him.'

So down ran Mrs. Nicholson, and found Harry standing in the narrow hall, and seemingly lost in study of the gas-lamp.

'Miss Price, sir, is at home; but she says what I said: before you see her, you must give your card or your name.'

'Give Miss Price this card,' said Harry; 'and as you want my name as well, it is Fortescue.'

'O, Miss Edith,' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'it's Mr. Fortescue! Isn't that the name of the gentleman you advertised for yesterday, when Mr. Nicholson came and carried off "the bank"?'

'Pray ask Mr. Fortescue to walk up,' said Edith.

So Harry Fortescue was shown up, and soon stood face to face with Edith in that dingy back drawing-room in the lodging-house in Lupus-street. It was very different from the conservatory at High Beech, or from Amicia's exquisite little boudoir in Lowndes-street.

Now it would be hard to say which felt most fear on this occasion, Edith or Harry. It is always odious to be the receiver of charity, however delicately and generously bestowed; and the only excuse in Edith's eyes for her mother's consenting to receive those young men's bounty was that bitter necessity which knows no law. It was sour bread, but still it was bread. Besides, was not Edith doing all she could to go out as a governess, and support her mother and sister on the magnificent salary she was sure to command by her talents? She had a natural dignity, too, which supported her under this trial, and she recollected it was not for her sake, but that of her poor, feeble, bedridden mother and her little sister. There she stood, dark and lovely, of a very different type of beauty from either Amicia or Florry, but quite as beautiful in her way as either of them. It was more than a year and a half since Harry had seen her, and she was then a beautiful but an unformed girl—something like an unfinished statue, at which a sculptor has worked hard, but left rude and rough; now she was like a cedar which a man has planted and gone away, and returning in two years finds tall and slender, and passed from a shrub into a tree. Up to that Saturday afternoon Harry and Edward had only thought of the Price family as a whole—as a human trinity consisting of three persons—as an idea, rather than as so many individuals. But as Harry Fortescue now beheld Edith Price, the idea resolved itself into its component parts, and he saw, for the first time, that Edith Price was a very lovely girl of real flesh and blood. He was rather abashed, therefore; but he felt that he had to say something, and he said it.

'I came, Miss Price, to say how sorry I am that the cheque which I sent you miscarried. As soon as I saw your advertisement I returned to town; and in this envelope you will find another cheque, which I hope Mrs. Price will find useful.'

'You are very good, Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith. 'Mamma will be so grateful to you.'

'Pray do not say a word about that,' said Harry. 'But tell me, how is Mrs. Price?'

'No better, I am afraid,' said Edith sadly. 'The doctors from the first said she would never be better. The shock she received by poor papa's sudden death was too crushing.'

'I am so sorry,' said Harry. Then, seeing that Edith was on the very verge of tears, and that it was only her pride which hindered her grief from gushing out, he rose to depart.

'I am sure, Miss Price, you will not mistake my motive in intruding on you. I was only anxious that you should know it was neither mine nor Edward Vernon's fault that the cheque which has disappeared so mysteriously never reached you.'

'It was very good of you, Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith, holding out her hand; 'and some day I trust God will enable me to prove to you how grateful I am.'

'Not a word of that, if you please,' said Harry. 'The little that I have done—and you must remember that Edward Vernon shares that little with me—is as much a duty in our eyes as any of the other duties of life which—' Here he paused, not exactly knowing how to finish the sentence, he was so frightened.

'Which other people do not fulfil,' said Edith, with a smile through her tears. 'That only makes your behaviour and Mr. Vernon's the more noble.'

'Good-bye,' said Harry, and in another moment his feet were heard by good Mrs. Nicholson creaking down her ill-joined stairs. Before she could run up from her kitchen to let him out, Harry Fortescue had escaped, and was striding down Lupus-street.

'So that's Mr. Fortescue,' said Mrs. Nicholson; 'and a fine tall gentleman he is, and very good-looking too. I always did say fine and handsome men come from the West. We've a proper lot of men down in North Devon.'

Nor was she long in running upstairs to tell Edith her opinion of her visitor.

'I did not like to let him in all at once, Miss Edith. That would not a-been proper, you know, to show a strange gentleman in to a young lady unprotected like you. But I saw at the first glance he was a gentleman born and bred, and so tall and strong, and winsome in the face. He's made many a heart ache, I'll bet a penny; and will make many more ache before he has done. The Fortescues, as I told you, always were a fine manly race, and now you see it with your own eyes, Miss Edith.'

'I have seen Mr. Fortescue before,' said Edith, smiling at Mrs. Nicholson's enthusiasm about our hero—if he is our hero—and then she added, 'but it was some time ago, when I was quite a child. I think, though, I can say he was always good, and,' she added with a little hesitation, 'good-looking.'

'Why not speak it outright, Miss Edith?' said honest Mrs. Nicholson. 'Even a child might see how handsome Mr. Fortescue is.'

'Handsome is that handsome does,' said Edith, repeating one of Mrs. Marjoram's favourite proverbs, though not at all in the uncharitable way in which that lady usually applied it.

'I'll be bound he's handsome in deeds as well as in words and looks,' said Mrs. Nicholson.

'I have found him so both in words and deeds,' said Edith, with a sigh. 'I have not had time or opportunity to find him so in looks. Besides, why should I think of his looks?'

'A cat may look at a king, you know,' said Mrs. Nicholson; 'and I am sure, as far as looks go, you are a cat that any king might look at.'

'If you call me a cat,' said Edith, 'I'll show you my claws.'

'Claws!' said Mrs. Nicholson, taking one of Edith's soft small hands in her red fist—'claws! there's never a claw on this hand to scratch a mouse.'

'Yes, but I have claws,' said Edith. 'If any one ill-treats me, or insults me, I could give them a good scratch. I should like to have scratched Mrs. Boffin only yesterday.'

'What's the good of thinking of such low-lived people?' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'I am sure I pity Mr. Boffin, if so be there be a Mr. Boffin. But I must run down, Miss Edith, and get some tea made for Mrs. Price.'

'Stay a moment,' said Edith. 'I should be so much obliged to you if you would get this cheque cashed, and pay your rent out of it, and bring the rest to me. I want to pay the weekly bills.'

'Well, I never!' said Mrs. Nicholson, as she went downstairs with the cheque. 'And did all this money come from that handsome young gentleman? Here, you Betsy, you lock the airey-gate, and put up the chain on the street-door; and all you do, never let your father come in, for I'm going off to cash a cheque to pay our rent, and as sure as there's money in the house on Saturday night, he's sure to smell it out. There's no scent that lies like money; morning, noon, and night you may smell money and hunt it, though there's few that are in at the death. Now, you Betsy, do you hear what I was a-saying of?'

'Yes, mother, I mind you,' said the precocious Betsy; 'but father will never come to-night or to-day, after he'd got "the bank" yesterday.'

'There's no telling what a husband will do, I tell you, Betsy. Often an' often they come like the Day of Judgment, or a thief in the night. No wife's safe against her husband; that's the law, Betsy.'

'Then the law ought to be altered,' said Betsy, as her mother was putting on her bonnet and shawl.

'So they have been, Betsy; and what the law now says is, that women have rights. But somehow or other a husband's law, Betsy, is a natural law above all laws; and the difference between a good husband and a bad one is, that the one rides on the law like a gentleman, and the other rides it to death like a blackguard; but both the bad and the good ride on the law, and the most we poor women can do is to ride behind on a pillion.'

'What's a pillion, mother?' said Betsy.

'A pillion, Betsy,' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'is a kind of a saddle, on which old-fashioned women ride behind their husbands down in the West. You mayn't ever ride on a pillion, perhaps, but you'll know what it is to ride behind if you're ever married—which it will never be, Betsy, if you take my advice.'

'I think,' said Betsy, 'it would be better to ride behind than not ride at all, mother.'

'That's what all silly young chits say that knows no better, Betsy. But you mind the house, and don't let your father in, if he rings ever so, before I come back.'

'Very good, mother,' said Betsy.

And so Mrs. Nicholson went off to cash the cheque.

And now, as the reader has been really very good and patient, we must take him into our confidence, and tell him how it was that Harry and Edward Vernon undertook the charge of the Price family; but if any reader laughs at our reasons, or even at Harry and Edward, all we can say is, that we hope we shall never write another story for his amusement.

You know—at least, we think you know—that Harry and Edward were at Eton together, where they had done nothing except play at cricket and foot-ball. When they had been at that famous college for more than five years, their guardians—they were both orphans—thought it time they should learn something; so they sent them to a private tutor, to master in two years what they had not learned in five. After much deliberation, the Rev. Mr. Price was chosen, and the two lads, just seventeen, were sent to Bourton Rectory, and confided to his care.

There are some people we know in this silly world who are foolish enough to believe, and even to declare, that no man can ever care for his tutor. That we emphatically deny. It may be true that some men, or even many men, are not fond of their tutors, just as some men do not care for their mothers-in-law, or some step-mothers of their step-sons; but just as some men are very fond of their mothers-in-law, and some mothers of their step-sons, so some men are fond, and very fond, of their tutors. This was the case with Harry and Edward so far as Mr. Price was concerned. He was in all respects a most charming man and delightful companion. There was no athletic sport in which he did not excel; and if he did not

shoot or hunt, it was only because in that part of the country the clergy had abandoned hunting and shooting for visiting the poor and discharging their duties in other ways. Above all things, and this especially commended him to Harry and Edward, Mr. Price was no 'sap.' 'If a boy has not a natural turn or ability for study,' he used to say, 'what's the use of driving him on to it? You will only addle the small brains he has got by making him work eight hours a day.' Another of his maxims was, that more dunces were made by overwork than by overplay; and this rule he carried out in his education of Harry and Edward. The result was, that in those two years the two lads had made up all the way they had lost at Eton, and when they met up at Oxford fellows who had stayed till the same age at Eton, they were agreeably surprised to find that Mr. Price had taught them a great deal without their being aware of it, and that they passed among the freshmen at Christ Church as 'those two lucky fellows, Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon.' That Harry and Edward were not plucked in any examination at Oxford was all due to Mr. Price, and that they did little or nothing while up at 'the House' was not his fault. They were grateful to him as a tutor, and loved him and his family as a friend. Mrs. Price was as a mother to them who had no mother, and his little children, Edith and Mary, were as their sisters. In the vacation they went to stay with them often and often, and all that dread last long vacation, when the terror of approaching 'Greats' overshadowed them, they spent at Bourton, 'coached,' as the phrase is, by Mr. Price. When, therefore, the examination took place in November 186—, and first Harry Fortescue and then Edward Vernon got his *testamur*—that invaluable document which entitles the happy undergraduate to a degree—they were both delighted, and almost the first thing that Harry said when he knew they were both safe through was,

'I say, Ned, this is all Price's doing. We ought to be eternally obliged to him. We must make him a very handsome present.'

They little knew how soon their gratitude would have to be shown.

The December that followed that final examination was very cold. There was skating for weeks. Bourton Mere was a noble sheet of water. If you think by 'mere' you have run Bourton to earth or to water in Cheshire, you may be right, for there are many meres in that fine county; but then you may also be wrong, for are there not 'meres' in other parts of England, and was not Whit-lesea Mere a mere till it was drained, not to mention Windermere? But wherever it was, Bourton Mere was deep and broad, more than a mile long, and on it Harry and Edward had learned to skate with Mr. Price. As soon as Christmas was over, they were to go down to Bourton to spend a few days, and off they set at the appointed time. The train put them down within a mile of the mere.

'I say, Harry,' said Edward, 'let us take our skates and walk over to the mere. Our luggage can go over to Bourton in the cart.'

'Master's on the mere with Miss Edith,' said the boy who drove the cart. 'You'll find him there.'

Away the young men went, full of life and strength, and reached the mere at racing speed.

'Why, there's no one on the mere but Edith!' cried Harry.

'O, he's sure to be there,' said Edward Vernon. 'He's putting on his skates.'

Mr. Price was there, and he was not putting on his skates. He was under the ice. All that was left of him was his hat floating on a great hole in the ice. The noble spirit was gone, never to return.

For a while Harry and Edward did what they could. They got ropes and ladders and all the appliances so useless after an accident. At last, when more than an hour had elapsed, they went home with Edith, who seemed stunned and dazed. All the child could say was, 'Where is papa? why does he not return with us?' Poor thing! she was old enough to know why he did not return, but for a while grief had made her silly and childish.

But the bitterest part of all was breaking the sad news to Mrs. Price. At first she was wild with grief. She rushed to the mere, only to get there in time to see the stiff form of her husband dragged from beneath the ice, and to see his staring eyes and blue pinched hands and face. Then she swooned away, and was carried back to bed. Brain-fever followed, and the end was partial paralysis, which rendered her bedridden. Thus it may be said that Edith and Mary were robbed of both their parents at once.

In a day or two Harry and Edward went back to town, only to return to the funeral; and then it came out that Mr. Price had left no provision for his family. He had not long been settled in a college living, and as a tutor he had lived, so far as his pupils were concerned, 'not wisely, but too well.' He had been too liberal and hospitable, in short, and, instead of saving anything, had died in debt. What he had left behind him for his family was worse than nothing. The furniture at the rectory had to be sold to pay the outstanding liabilities; and last of all, the new rector came in, or his lawyer came in, which is much the same thing, for dilapidations, and all the little surplus was swallowed up.

The day after the funeral the young men went back to town, after taking a tender leave of Edith and Mary. The worst was, the Prices seemed to have no relations. They were as the mushrooms of the earth, which seem to spring from neither flower nor seed. Truly a more desolate family was never seen. But they had a host of friends. Of course every one in the neighbourhood sympathised with them, but a starving family cannot exist on sympathy alone;

and as for all the old men and women round, clerical as well as lay, they were agreed that nothing could be done for the family of a man who had been so improvident.

'Depend upon it,' said Mrs. Grimalkin, an old maid who had taken brevet rank—the Grimalkins are a very old family in that part, and in fact in all parts of the country—'depend upon it, it runs in the blood. It's no use helping people who can't help themselves.'

'Quite so,' said Mrs. Tabby, Mrs. Grimalkin's first cousin, who had dined ten times every year with the Prices, and only given them one tea in return; 'I always set my face against extravagance.'

And so between the two the Prices went to the wall.

It was on that cold January night, after the two friends had returned to town, and when they had dined at Mrs. Boffin's, who had done her best to entertain them, that Harry, who, as our readers must long since have remarked, generally took the lead, said all at once to Edward Vernon,

'Ned, it will never do to let those poor Prices starve. They really do not seem to have a friend in the world.'

'How can we help it?' said Edward.

'Help it! of course we can,' said Harry. 'It only needs a little self-denial. What's your income, Ned?'

'Mine?' said Edward—'mine is 800*l.* a year.'

'And mine just under a thousand,' said Harry. 'Both are a great deal more than we want.'

'I don't know that, either. We haven't much to spare at the end of the year,' said Edward.

'That's because we are extravagant, like poor Mr. Price. Besides, recollect, Ned, our education is over; we sha'n't have to pay much more either to "the House" or the Dons.'

'Very true,' said Edward; 'I never thought of that.'

'I'll tell you what, Ned,' said Harry—'I'll put aside 175*l.* a year out of my income, if you will say you will give 125*l.*; that will be 300*l.* a year—100*l.* for each of them. What do you say, old fellow? It will be such a pleasure to help them till they can do something for themselves. Depend upon it, we shall never feel the want of it.'

'With all my heart, Harry,' said Edward. 'I am sure they need it.'

'Then that is settled,' said Harry; 'and I'll write a letter to Edith Price to-morrow. She can show it to her mother when she gets better.'

'It's not so bad after all,' said Edward, 'to be a younger son; at any rate, you have the command of your own money, and can do as you like with what you have.'

'We won't talk any more about it,' said Harry, 'or we shall think we are doing some very generous thing. What we do is no more than our duty to the memory of our dear friend.'

So they talked no more about it; but the next day Harry

tescue wrote the nicest letter in the world to Edith Price, who was then about thirteen, and told her all that was needful to be known—how he and Edward Vernon were only discharging a debt of gratitude to the memory of Mr. Price by contributing to the support of his family. She need not trouble herself with sending any reply, but as soon as Mrs. Price was able to attend to anything like business, Edith was to tell her that 300*l.* a year would be placed unto her account at the Bourton Bank, and that it would continue to be paid so long as Mrs. Price needed it. In the mean time 100*l.* had been lodged in the bank, which the family were to consider as the first instalment of the 300*l.* There was a P.S. added, which ran thus:

‘Dear Edith, if there is anything in this letter which you do not understand, I daresay Mrs. Simpkins, the curate’s wife, will explain it all to you. In the mean time, believe me, very affectionately yours,
HARRY FORTESCUE.’

It need hardly be said that when Mrs. Price could attend to business she was full of gratitude for the noble offer of Harry and Edward. Her pride, indeed, would have led her to refuse it. But of what use is pride in a mother with two destitute daughters? It is clearly a luxury not to be indulged in. Mrs. Price accepted the first instalment, and the second and the third, and so it had gone on for more than five years. At first they had all lived in a little cottage at Bourton; then they went to France, and learnt French and music, and the 300*l.* a year was quite sufficient for all their wants. But pride, though it had not prevented Mrs. Price from accepting the bounty, forbade Edith to stay any longer in the country or abroad. When she was eighteen she said to her mother,

‘Mother, we must leave France and go to London. I must try to do something for myself and the family.’

The invalid, bedridden as she was, protested in vain. Edith would have her way; and to London they came, and established themselves in Lupus-street, shortly before the visit of the young men to High Beech.

As soon as they came, Harry suggested that it might be more convenient if they had their money by the month instead of by the quarter, as it would save all necessity for keeping any balance in the bank. This arrangement had been accepted with thanks; and so it was that, on the 8d of June 1870, the payment for the month which was expected never came.

And now the reader knows all that we know of the relations which existed between Edith Price, or E. P., and Harry Fortescue. It is perfectly true that these relations did not in the least answer to the scandalous suggestions of Mrs. Marjoram, any more than they did to those of Mr. Beeswing’s valet or Amicia. That they were perfectly pure and honourable must be plain to every one. That they were absurd and romantic may be very true; but if young men

are not to be romantic at the age of twenty-one, when in the world, we should like to know, are they to indulge in the luxury of that delightful feeling? We quite admit that very few men of fifty could have treated themselves to such a pleasure; but that only shows that men of fifty, ay, and women of that age, have often lost all taste for good works of this kind. The amusing thing was that both Harry and Edward were rather ashamed of what they had done; not of the deed itself, but lest the world should find them out and think them silly. They were both of that nature which led them to

'Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame;'

and so they were always in mortal fear, as the reader may have gathered from the conversation at High Beech, lest their noble act of charity should be detected and exposed. All we can say is, that we hope no man will ever have reason to blush for a more mortal sin than this allowance of 300*l.* a year paid by two young men to a deserving and destitute family. Tastes may differ, but we think, at the Day of Judgment, Harry and Edward will stand for this among the sheep rather than the goats.

CHAPTER XLV.

HOW THEY GOT ON AT HIGH BEECH.

'HAVE you seen Edith?' said Edward to Harry, as soon as he came back.

'Yes, and I have made it all right.'

'What a bore that cheque should have miscarried!' said Edward.

'That is now cancelled,' said Harry; and then he broke out, 'Do you know, Ned, Edith Price is a very lovely girl?'

'She always promised to be pretty,' said Edward in a half-conscious way, which really meant that he was quite satisfied with the recollection of Alice. 'How I wish we were back at High Beech, now that it's all right with Edith!'

'Come, come,' said Harry, 'you had a very jolly time at High Beech, and you know you couldn't stay there for ever.'

'But one might have stayed there till Monday,' said Edward, 'if it hadn't been—'

'For coming to town with me like a good fellow,' said Harry; 'but I can't pity you. Everything seemed to go wrong with me, and everything right with you. You might marry Alice Carlton to-morrow, if it depended on her.'

'And so you might marry Florry, if you chose to ask her; only you're too proud, and, let me say, a little too fond of making love to two women at once. Depend on it, there is nothing women like less than that; it's so unsettling.'

'Make love to two women at once!' said Harry. 'When did I make love to two women at once?'

'At High Beech,' said Edward. 'More than that, you did what is far worse in women's eyes. You let two women make love to you, and came away without giving either the preference. You're like a hive of bees that won't swarm, though the whole parish is after them with pots and pans.'

'But suppose I cared for neither of them,' said Harry, 'am I to be carried off without my consent?'

'There's no good denying it,' said Edward, 'for Alice told me one day, "I do so wish, Mr. Vernon, that Mr. Fortescue were a little more constant with Florry. As it is, he flirts sometimes with her, and sometimes with Lady Sweetapple."'

'I never did anything of the kind,' said Harry. 'I could see that they were neither of them indifferent to me; but I declare I never encouraged either of them.'

'They both thought you liked them, that's clear,' said Edward.

'Like!' said Harry; 'yes, "like" is just the word. I like them both very much; but as for love, I'm not so inflammable as you, Ned; I do not fall over head and ears in love with the first pretty woman I meet.'

'Neither with the first nor with the second either, it appears,' said Edward. 'All good things are three, Harry. Beware of the third.'

'Yes, if one only knew where to find her,' said Harry. 'But come along, I'm getting hungry. The sooner we get to the club and dine, the better I shall be pleased.'

In half-an-hour the two friends were seated at the University Club, enjoying their dinner with the appetite of lions. To look at them, none of their acquaintance would ever have fancied that, before coming to that banquet, they had smoothed the pillow of the destitute and afflicted, and that, if any pair ever deserved to have a good digestion on that 4th of June 1870, it was Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon.

While they were dining at the club, the party at High Beech were also seated at dinner. It cannot be said that repast was at all lively. With the departure of Harry and Edward they had lost the spring out of their year, as Mr. Beeswing remarked, quoting Herodotus, though no one detected him save Mr. Sonderling, who had been seen roaming in a demented way through the chase, and caught like a wild animal and made to stay to dinner.

'I must return to endue my state clothing,' he remonstrated.

But the plea was not allowed. He was to stay, and stay as he was. He sat opposite to Amicia, and gazed at her as Endymion at the moon. But she was as cold and hard as the full moon in March. Poor Mr. Sonderling, he had almost served her turn. If she could make him keep her secret one day longer, it would be enough. All her thoughts were now with Harry Fortescue; and if thoughts could meet and recognise each other, Amicia's would have met Florry's at Mrs. Boffin's or at the club, and had a battle royal

over Harry's body. As for Florry, she stared into space, and said little or nothing, though Mr. Beeswing tried hard to draw her out. Alice was soft and silent. She had also told Florry that Edward had assured her that the whole mystery about E. P. would soon be cleared up.

'All I know,' said Florry, 'is that E. P. is Edith Price, for I taxed Harry with it, and he did not deny it. I hate her as much as I hate Lady Sweetapple.'

Mrs. Marjoram talked to Colonel Barker of the Day of Judgment. To her surprise, that gallant veteran did not tremble like Felix, but went so far as to doubt whether the fires on that awful day would equal the cross-fire of the Ram Chowdah's howitzers on the breach of that famous hill fort.

'Such sentiments are downright shocking,' said Mrs. Marjoram to Mrs. Barker, after dinner.

'They are very natural, begging your pardon, Mrs. Marjoram, in a military man,' replied Mrs. Barker, standing up as usual for her gallant colonel.

As for Lord Pennyroyal, he again plunged into the great sugar question with Lady Carlton, and, as she never contradicted him, he probably thought he was right.

'One lump of sugar in your tea, no debt, and no tubbing,' seemed to be the three articles of his charter. Lady Pennyroyal was, as usual, genial and pleasant. She was altogether the most charitable woman in the world; and if any one made a hole in his manners, or even broke a great social rule, she was the first to run up to him and try to mend it. We forgot to say that on that Saturday night dear Miss Markham reappeared at dinner, to the delight of every one except Mrs. Marjoram, who whispered to Colonel Barker that she was sure 'that old maid was an artful, designing person, and in all probability, before she settled down there at High Beech, she had been no better than she should have been.'

'Upon my word,' said Colonel Barker, 'I see nothing in her but a very charming old lady. Don't you remember the way in which she gave us her strawberries? But I forget, you were not of the party.'

'I make it a rule,' said Mrs. Marjoram, as solemnly as though she were reading the Bible to a band of infidels—'I make it a rule, Colonel Barker, never to countenance with my presence the gathering together of the guilty; and that was why I would not let Mr. Marjoram visit Miss Markham's cottage.'

'Do you call us the guilty?' asked Colonel Barker; 'for we almost all of us went.'

'The present company are always excepted, you know,' said Mrs. Marjoram, 'and so you are excepted. But of the rest of the party, I can only say that I consider them false and frivolous.'

'What's false and frivolous, colonel?' said Mr. Beeswing, tired of his up-hill work with Florry.

'Not you,' said Colonel Barker, 'nor Count Pantouffles, nor Mrs. Marjoram; but all the rest of us, it seems, only because we went and ate strawberries at Miss Markham's.'

'I should call that remark, not false and frivolous,' said Mr. Beeswing; 'that, perhaps, would be too strong; but certainly frivolous and vexatious.'

'You hear what he says, Mrs. Marjoram,' said Colonel Barker. 'He says you are frivolous and vexatious.'

'I am accustomed to be despised,' said Mrs. Marjoram, with the air of a martyr; 'but my words are not less true, for all that.'

So she went on snapping and snarling at every one, until the ladies left the men to themselves.

After dinner, Florry and Alice played, but there was no life in them; and Amicia sang, and Mr. Sonderling; but except the German, who was still in his paradise or New Jerusalem of reawakened love, the 'performance,' as Florry persisted in calling it, was very flat.

When the singing was over, Mr. Sonderling sat by Amicia, and tried to lead her back to the College of the Deafs and Dumbs, but she was almost as mute as a fish, or as one of her father's former patients.

'There is a time for all things, Mr. Sonderling,' she said; 'and this is no time to think of Frankfort. I cannot bear it.'

'Ach.' said the German, 'whenever I think on Frankfort it makes me reflect.'

Then he said to himself, 'If I had only endued my state clothing, I had been more successful.'

Silly man! he thought those old wedding-clothes were a sort of charm to draw Amicia to him. He did not see that his renewed affection was sheer folly, '*Dummheit*,' '*Wahnsinn*,' and all the hard words which old Gretchen bestowed on it as she sat by herself knitting worsted stockings in the cottage kitchen.

'We have been rather late for several nights,' said Lady Carlton, 'and I think we had better have an early one. I hope you do not object, Lady Pennyroyal?'

'O, dear no,' said Lady Pennyroyal; and so they sailed off to bed. Nor were the men slow to follow. Lord Pennyroyal was always ready to go to bed, because it saved wax, spermaceti, oil, ozokerit, and tallow, as the case might be. 'No one knew,' he said, 'how much they might save in the year in a large household if they would only go to bed themselves, and see that their servants followed their example, at half-past ten.'

'But then there would be no society,' said Count Pantouffles—'no balls, no receptions.'

'And a very good thing too,' said Lord Pennyroyal as he took his candle. 'Society, as you call it, is another great evil &

the age, and it leads more than anything else to extravagance and ruin.'

Unhappy man! How well he would have lived in the deserts of Arabia, where there is no water even to baptise a child, and consequently none to wash with, and so consume soap!

'I shall not be much longer here,' said Amicia, as soon as Mrs. Crump left her. 'Only one day more—Sunday, that is like the last day in the calendars that children make before they leave school for the holidays. Monday I go back, and on Tuesday I shall see Harry. Of course he will call to see whether Lady Charity will invite the insipid Edward to Ascot. I wish I could see him sooner. Ah me! Yet, on the whole, things have gone well here—far better than I had any right to expect. I have escaped great dangers by a little—what shall I call it?—management. Yes, management will do, or forethought, or presence of mind, call it what you will. Well, then, deceit? O, no, not deceit. Whom have I deceived? Florry Carlton? I only told her Harry was in love with Edith Price, and that was not deceit. He may be, though I don't know it, and'—taking refuge in her glass—'I don't believe it. Well, well, all is fair in war and love, they say; and what is love but war with all the world of women to gain the great object of our ambition—the man we love? And now I will go to bed. I am too sleepy to think any more, not even to smile at poor Carl with his reflections and ridiculous attentions. Poor fellow, he too has served my turn.'

After this soliloquy Amicia went to bed, in charity with herself at least, if not with all the rest of the world.

'Alice,' said Florry penitentially, 'I have been a great fool.'

'Indeed I don't see it,' said Alice.

'But I feel it,' said Florry, 'and that's worse than any one else seeing it. I was a great fool to quarrel with Harry Fortescue at the last moment.'

'I did not quarrel with Edward,' said Alice.

'That's because you were a fool too,' said Florry fiercely. 'You ought to have quarrelled with him, a man half or three parts engaged to you whom you detect writing to Miss Edith Price.'

'O, Florry dear,' said Alice, drawing her arms round her, 'don't scold me so. I couldn't help it.'

'I daresay they have both seen her by this time,' said Florry savagely.

'I hope they may, if either of them is to see her at all,' said Alice. 'Men don't make love in pairs.'

'Much you know about it, you silly child,' said Florry. 'For aught I know, they do.'

Then she went on after a pause,

'Do you know, I hate Edith Price even more than I do Lady Sweetapple. I think she's more dangerous.'

'That's only because Harry is away, and you think he may have

seen her; but Lady Sweetapple is here safe under the same roof, and separated from Harry. You will be quite as jealous as ever of Lady Sweetapple when she goes back to town.'

'There's a good deal in that,' said Florry; 'and now I think of it, I hate them both equally.'

'I don't think I hate anybody in the whole world,' said Alice. 'I know I love Edward, and I am sure he loves me, and so I can trust him with all the Sweetapples and Edith Prices in the world.'

'You are indeed fortunate,' said Florry, as she kissed her sister. And so they went to bed—the one to sleep a sweet sleep full of Edward Vernon and happiness; the other to toss and turn about, trying in her dreams to clutch Harry Fortescue, and ever doomed to find some one snatching him away from her.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HARRY AND EDWARD TAKE EDITH AND MARY TO CHURCH.

NEXT day was Sunday. Now, with all our respect for that holy day, it must be confessed that Sunday in London is a dull day. As of the gold of Havilah it is emphatically said 'the gold of that land is good,' so of Sunday in London it must be as distinctly declared that 'it is dull.' What do you call 'dull'? says some rigid church-goer, who never misses his three full services every Sunday of his life. If we were permitted to answer, we should say, we call what you are in the habit of doing 'dull,' and we think we can discover the reason why you are so dull in your conversation all the week or your behaviour on Sunday. But that is not the dullness of which we are complaining. It is that when you have been to church once or twice, as every one ought to do on Sunday, there is little or nothing left to be done in London on Sunday. You may call between the services on your friends; but if they are of the three-service order, ten chances to one you find them at dinner in the middle of the day, and have to over-eat yourself to keep them in countenance and company. Or you may call after four o'clock, and then you are sure to find them out. They are, in fact, breathing after the services like yourself; and you would not be so cruel as to deprive them of their natural air, would you?

Well, suppose you don't call, but take a walk in the Park among the rest of the 'miserable sinners' who throng it on Sunday afternoon. In no place shall you find the truth of the adage more forcibly brought home to you, that the company of a crowd is dull. However fine the weather be in London on a Sunday, you must always enjoy it with a reservation. If it is fine in town, it is sure to be finer in the country; and as man by virtue of his immortal soul—which we had better make the most of as long as Mr. Darwin and his followers allow us to keep it—naturally desires the better and scorns the worse, a fine Sunday in London makes us

long to fly away from it into the country. But if you are not content with the Park, you may go to 'the Zoo' and see the animals. Yes, and the brutes who come to stare at them. 'You are misanthropic,' some one will say. 'Not at all. We delight in the company of our species, but not in such specimens of it as we usually meet at the Zoo.' Of course there are nice people there sometimes, but this only adds to your agony when you find you have been there a whole Sunday afternoon and missed them. But a crowd can only be judged by the mass, and of the mass at the Zoo on Sunday afternoons it may be said they might with great propriety change places with the beasts at which they stare. Thus we have seldom seen a finer collection of bears than you may see there any Sunday afternoon. 'Male and female?' Yes, male and female. Brown bears, and black bears, and white. There is no danger of the breed dying out: brown bears enough to replenish Lithuania and Wermeland—little child, look out that last place in the map—white bears enough to retire to the Arctic regions and renew the race, if ever Polar navigators threaten their extinction. As for owls, we have never seen such a splendid show—eagle owls, with feathers on their heads; screech owls, screaming out their own vulgarity. Geese in such flocks, that one is tempted to revive the old Greek oath, and swear—only not by them, but at them. Ducks a few, not very many. Cats in quantities—old cats and young cats—the Honourable Mrs. Grimalkin and Mrs. Tabby amongst them. Apes, a whole wilderness of them. Asses, a much finer show than you will see in the East, walking about free and unsaddled. What shall we say of boars? Never was such an exhibition seen. At the Zoo every Sunday you may literally see the Great Exhibition of Bores of all Nations. There you may see them with necks like cranes—women as long-throated, but not nearly so graceful, as giraffes. Morally speaking, there is no lack of snakes or serpents; still less any deficiency in laughing or crying hyenas; and as for crocodiles, there they are walking about in a way never seen on the banks of old Nile, looking human to the very life with their handkerchiefs up to their eyes. You say this must be all very amusing to those who have eyes to see it. So it may be once or twice; but the society of rational brutes, as they may be called, soon palls on one, and so the Zoo—unless you go to see the beasts, and on Sunday you can't see them because of the crowd of men and women—is, to us at least, the dullest place in the world.

So much for what may be called the amusements of a London Sunday, of which foreigners say they find them as lively as a London fog. In fact, it is hard to say of which disease foreigners die most in London, our sad Sunday amusements or our London fogs. Both combined are rapidly fatal to most foreign constitutions.

So for a family man, after he has gone to church twice on Sunday, and tried to call at one or two houses, and taken a turn in the

Park, and stoutly refused to go to the Zoo, what remains but to go home to an early dinner, say at six, that the cook may go out—and mind, if you do not let her go out, she will be sure to try to poison you all the rest of the week—and then to read a sermon or two after dinner, and retire to bed? All very proper, you say, and decorous; and so do we. We are not about to run down dining at six on Sunday, or sermons, or retiring early to rest. We are not, as other men are, cosmopolitans, frequenters of Pratt's, revellers, and suchlike: far from it. We only say that such a mode of passing Sunday is rather dull than lively; and that, try to make the best of it, a Sunday in London is always dull as compared with one spent in the country. There is something in the atmosphere of a London Sunday which depresses and darkens our thoughts. All the blacks, which in the week are suspended in the air, fall down on that day and stifle us; while in the country the pure air and blue sky freshen and brighten us up.

But if these things be so with the father of a family, who can retire, metaphorically, into its bosom, and there as it were Sabatarianise till Monday comes, what must it be with young men who have no family, and only Mrs. Boffin or the club in whom to seek refuge? The answer can only be, that they find it duller still.

Harry Fortescue and Edward Vernon were therefore dull on that Sunday, the 5th of June 1870. It was only natural, and they were prepared to go to church and enjoy their Sunday sadly, after the fashion of the town.

With all their dislike for work, they had one redeeming quality. They were early risers, except when they went to balls; then, as we have seen, they got up late, and felt no shame; but on other mornings, when they had taken their proper rest, they were up as fresh as larks, ready to breakfast at nine, and do what was becoming a gentleman during the day.

Another good quality they had, which, we hope, will recommend them to most of our readers. They always went to church. Nay, they did not mind going to church twice, if the sermon was likely to be good, or, better still, if there was no sermon, only prayers. They were High Churchmen—most young men are nowadays, on the principle, we suppose, of beginning with an exalted standard, that we may not sink too low in after-life. A young man who is a Low Churchman is like a barometer in which the mercury is always at zero. It may fall, but in the nature of things it can never rise. On the whole, therefore, we prefer young men to be High Churchmen; and if we did not, we could not help it, for, as we have said, Harry and Edward were High Churchmen. Living in that neighbourhood, they went regularly either to St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, or St. Barnabas; and in this respect they were everything that could be desired. Conscientious Christians, not troubling themselves much with doctrine; living by faith and showing their faith, as you

know they showed it, by their works. They may lapse in some subsequent chapter, because neither we nor they are rigid, rasping Calvinists, like Mrs. Marjoram and the Hon. Mrs. Grimalkin; but down to the very last chapter of this story, that is to say, throughout their whole novel life, they were, in spite of their indolence and want of ambition, what most mothers would desire their sons to be, cheerfully religious, perplexed by no doubts, and debased by no bad practices. What more, we ask, could the most anxious parent wish? Yet Harry and Edward had no parents. They had no mother to admire them and point to them as a family pattern. Melancholy in that as in so many other things.

After breakfast that morning, some time before they usually started for church, Harry Fortescue suddenly said, 'I think it would be a good thing, Ned, to take those two girls to church.'

'What girls?' said Edward. 'They are too far off.'

The silly fellow, you see, was thinking of Florry and Alice, and his heart was at High Beech, though his body was beneath Mrs. Boffin's roof.

'What girls?' said Harry; 'why, Edith and Mary Price, to be sure. I have been thinking a good deal of them since yesterday.'

'But will they like it?' asked Edward.

'Who can tell till we try?' said Harry. 'It is surely far better for them to go to church properly protected than to walk through the streets all alone. Edith Price is far too pretty to be left unprotected.'

'But we are not their natural protectors,' said Edward, rallying at once to the standard of Alice like a true knight.

'Yes, we are,' said Harry. 'I should like to know who is, if we are not. They belong to us in trust, on the *cypres* doctrine which Mr. Sheepskin has been dinning into our ears all these years. They belong to us jointly and severally, in two individual moieties; and, dropping this jargon, I should like to know who is to take them to church, if we do not?'

'That's very like old Justice Earwig's ruling about the man accused of bribery who happened to be a rich man: "Mr. Snooks must have bribed and found the money," he declared; "for if he did not, who did?" Whereupon Snooks was found guilty, fined, and imprisoned.'

'Well,' said Harry, 'let us set off and escort them.'

'I don't half like it,' said Edward.

'You'll like it much better as soon as you see Edith Price,' said Harry.

So Edward Vernon was over-persuaded and went, muttering something which sounded like a creed; and so it was, for it was a never-ending profession of his faith in Alice Carlton. When they reached No. — Lupus-street, it was only ten minutes past ten.

'Don't run away, Ned,' said Harry; 'I sha'n't let you off.'

Mrs. Nicholson answered the bell, and replied that Miss Edith was at home. The good woman was smiling again, for her husband had really not come to claim any portion of her week's rent. The clean sweep he had made of 'the bank' had satisfied even him for a fortnight.

'Will you be good enough to say to Miss Price,' said Harry Fortescue, 'that Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon have come to ask to be allowed to go to church with her and Miss Mary?'

'Very good, sir. I'd ask you to step into the parlour, only an old single gentleman lodges in there, and I daren't ask you in without his leave.'

'Never mind,' said Harry, 'we will wait in the hall.' It was really only a passage about four feet wide, but he thought it would please Mrs. Nicholson if he called it a hall.

'O, Miss Edith!' said Mrs. Nicholson, 'here's Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon come to beg to be allowed to go to church with you and Miss Mary.'

'I can't go till I have asked my mother,' said Edith. 'Perhaps she might not like it.'

So she went into her mother's room, who had passed a good night, the first for three or four days; for, bad as it was to be dependent on others for money, it was worse to have no money at all. For her, therefore, on that June morning, Mrs. Price was particularly bright and lively.

'Mother,' said Edith, 'Mary and I are going to church.'

'Very well, my dear. God bless you both,' said the invalid.

'Yes, mother; but there is something more. Mr. Fortescue and Mr. Vernon are downstairs, and they have sent up to ask if they may be allowed to take Mary and me to church.'

'I scarcely know what to say about it,' said Mrs. Price. 'It is so hard to have to lie here in bed and decide for others.'

Then, after a few minutes' thought, she said,

'Well, well, I suppose you may go. When one is under so many obligations, it does not much matter if one more is incurred. But mind, Edith, that you and Mary come back straight home as soon as the service is over.'

'Of course, mother,' said Mary. 'Where else should we go?'

So Edith told Mrs. Nicholson to say that she and her sister would be down in a moment, and in less than no time she came down with Mary; for, as you know, they were ready dressed to go to church.

Dressed, yes; but not in that array of silks and satins in which some ladies delight to go to church. Edith Price wore a black silk skirt over a dark violet petticoat, and she had a black velvet jacket and a hat, not a bonnet. And she wore the hat for a very good reason—because it shaded her face. Did it become her as well? Yes, it became her exceedingly. But then I have told you that Edith Price, with her clear dark complexion, her black hair, and

great bright eyes, and exquisite mouth and chin, was so pretty a girl, that you could scarce meet her in the street without turning back to look at her. Of course then you could only see her back; but her figure behind was so graceful and beautiful, especially in that velvet jacket, that every one felt they were amply repaid for turning round. They did not feel hard and stiff, like Lot's wife just before she was turned into a pillar of salt, but soft and warm, like ginger and spice, and all those nice things of which the nursery rhyme says little girls are made of. Then she had very pretty feet, as we think you already know. In fact, she was in every way a lovely, ladylike girl, and on that 5th of June she might have held her own against any lady of the land, however gorgeously arrayed. Mary Price, too, was a pretty little girl, with lighter brown hair all streaming down her back, in every way suited to be the sister of Edith.

So these two descended the staircase, and stood in the hall, face to face with Harry and Edward.

It was dark in the passage, though outside the sun was blazing, as you may all remember it blazed in June 1870. Harry Fortescue raised his hat; not so exquisitely, of course, as Count Pantouffles, but still in the most gentlemanlike manner, and Edward Vernon followed his example.

'Good-morning, Miss Price,' said Harry. 'It is very good of you to let us have the honour of escorting you to church. Mr. Vernon has come with me, because he wishes to renew the friendship which has lately only been kept up by an occasional letter.'

'I am very much obliged to you both, and especially to Mr. Vernon for his kind letter from High Beech, though it came too late to stop my advertisement.'

'Pray don't mention it,' said Edward; and then, being rather nervous, he gave Harry a nudge, as much as to say, 'Why did you bring me into this?'

'We had better lose no time,' said Harry, 'but make haste, or we shall be late for church. You would not mind going to St. Barnabas, Miss Price?'

'Not in the least,' said Edith. 'The less so, as that is the church to which I and Mary usually go.'

'I wonder we never saw you,' said Harry, opening the door. 'And yet, after all, it is not so odd, because at St. Barnabas the men and women are separated, like the sheep and the goats.'

By this time they were out in the street, and as the pavement in Lupus-street will hardly admit of four persons walking on it abreast, Edward Vernon had to walk behind with Mary, while Harry Fortescue went on in front with Edith. The pair behind had little conversation. Mary was afraid, and Edward lost in thought as to what Alice Carlton was doing at that moment. Harry and Edith were far more lively. That visit of yesterday seemed to have made

them old friends again, and Harry talked so well and feelingly of her father and the happy life he had led at Bourton, and how much he owed to all of them, that Edith was placed at once at her ease.

'It is so kind of you, Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith, turning her great eyes on Harry, 'to put the case in that way; but we well know how much we owe to you and Mr. Vernon.'

'We have only done our duty, Miss Price; and I hope we may always do it. But, after all, doing one's duty is but unprofitable service.'

'Perhaps,' said Edith, with a strong protest in the 'perhaps;' 'but how few there are that do it!'

'The more reason for those who feel the duty to discharge it.'

By this time they were on the bridge which leads across the railway from the end of Lupus-street to the Queen's-road, and the spire of St. Barnabas was in sight. They passed the drinking-fountain on the bridge, and saw a bloated, blear-eyed drunkard cooling the tip of his tongue with a cup of cold water.

'Did you see what was written under the fountain?' said Harry, as they passed.

'No,' said Edith; 'I only saw that horrid man, and I was so frightened.'

'The inscription,' said Harry, 'was, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." And a very good text it seemed for the man who was drinking, though not for the fountain. It put me in mind of Mrs. Marjoram—but I forget, you do not know that lady?'

'I know the man,' said Edith, drawing herself nearer to Harry with a little shudder as she saw him following them.

'Know the man!—how could you know him, Miss Price?' asked Harry in astonishment.

'He is the husband of our poor landlady, Mrs. Nicholson—a very good woman with a very bad husband. He has just stripped her of all her savings.'

'What a wretch!' said Harry, as they turned into the porch of St. Barnabas, with Edward and Mary Price at their heels. Now pray observe, that if Harry Fortescue had been a wicked young man, he would certainly not have taken Edith Price to St. Barnabas. No; he would have taken her to some place of worship where he might have sat next to her, sung out of the same hymn-book, and, in short, been with her the whole service. But at St. Barnabas, as is well known, the fashion of the true frequenters of the place is quite different. A stern verger, like Rhadamanthus, parts the male and female, and assigns them separate seats on either side of the church. So that a man may go to worship there with the wife of his bosom, and not know so much as whether she knows psalm-tune. It is true that in the side aisle some sit side by side with their wives; but this always bitter pangs; he passes by them with averted

mien, and no doubt does penance for their sins on parched peas and water instead of a hot-meat supper that night.

Harry and his party were too early to betake themselves to any such subterfuge, even if they had intended it, and so they had seats pointed out to them in the centre aisle; and there the four sat, Edith and her sister a little in advance, gazing at the painted windows in the sanctuary until the procession passed through the church and service began. They had settled beforehand that they would what they called sit out the service; by which they meant that they would not go out at the pause before the communion, but stay through that and the sermon.

What Edith thought of during those two hours no one can tell.

It is only charitable to suppose that she only thought of her prayers. Nothing could be more discreet and decorous than her behaviour; and if she did not make so many bowings and genuflexions as some of the ladies by her, who were continually bobbing up and down, she at least in some way conformed to most of the practices of the congregation. She was a pure and innocent girl, and no doubt she was pleased at the attention shown to her by Harry and Edward in coming to take her to church. It is a great mistake to imagine that women are insensible to attention; only let it be offered frankly and not clumsily, and they are always ready to accept it from any one who has a claim to offer it. Where no good claim exists, it degenerates into impertinence, and ought to be chastised accordingly. Edith Price, therefore, was both devout and delighted; and it is so rare that both these feelings meet in church, that she thought the whole service charming, and was sorry when it was over.

But we are afraid that neither Edward nor Harry was quite in such a frame of mind. Edward, as we know, was full of Alice Carlton and High Beech, and when an anthem was sung, and he heard it was 'O, that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest,' he wished that he, too, were a dove, that he might fly away and be at rest by Alice Carlton's side. This was all so very silly, and so very natural.

Harry Fortescue, we are afraid, was not so full of either Florry Carlton or Amicia Sweetapple as they were of him. Nor was he as devotional as usual; he made his bows and genuflexions in due form, but his eyes rested on Edith Price, who sat on the other side of the aisle a little before him. When she bent her head forward, he could not help seeing how beautifully her head was set on her neck; not like some of those necks, which we all have seen; which look as though they had heads stuck on them which did not belong to them. When she knelt down, he saw how graceful and supple her figure and waist were, and could not help thinking that a velvet jacket was more becoming than all others. Some one will say that a velvet jacket in June was very out of season—far too warm for any lady to wear! but suppose you had only one jacket, and that a

velvet one, would you not be bound to wear it? Just like the man in Poggio's stories, who in bitter winter did not find it at all cold in a thin coat because it was his only garment. Besides, have we not all of us known Junes, the June of 1871 for instance, when one shivered and shook, and would have worn a sealskin, or a sealskin waistcoat, if one had not been ashamed? At any rate, there was the velvet jacket, and Harry admired it, both for its own sake and for her that wore it. He went through the service in rather a dreamy state. When they chanted the Nicene Creed to Gregorian tones, his spirit soared with the music into regions of delight; and when it ceased he sank down again, like a lark whose song is over falls suddenly to earth. We would rather not say that Harry Fortescue remembered the sermon—no, not so much as a word of it; it went in at one ear and out at the other without a trace of its passage. What he seemed to see and hear was Edith Price, and Edith Price alone. Poor Florry! poor Amicia! Shall we add, poor Harry? You all know whither he was going—fast down hill, as many of you think, in love with a girl who was going out as a governess.

'O no,' some one will say; 'it can't be so bad as that; he has too much self-respect. Of course, he will meet Lady Sweetapple on Tuesday, and Florry at Ascot; they will take care of him. He will either marry the heiress or the wealthy widow. Besides, he's half engaged to them.' Half to two women! We have often heard that said of women by women that they are half, or even more, engaged to two men, but it is never said of men by men. A man to man is either engaged to one woman, and to one alone, or to none. 'They will take care of him,' indeed, and so will we; and as he belongs to us entirely, and is our child both by birth and adoption, we will take care that Harry Fortescue does the right thing in the right place. So read to the end without guessing or anticipation, and you shall see what you shall see.

When the sermon was over, the sheep and the goats rose and left their seats, and then they mingled together at the door of St. Barnabas, and very glad we must say both seemed to meet again. Will it be so at the last great church-going of the sheep and the goats, when the whole congregation of all that have ever dwelt on earth will be called to the Day of Judgment, and none will be able to evade the summons, or excuse himself or herself on the ground of a bad cold, or of a late party on Saturday night?

But to return to our particular sheep and goats. Edith and Mary waited at the south porch, and there in a moment or two Harry and Edward joined them. Harry would have been with them in less than no time, only Edward would stay to stare at the painted glass. 'As if you hadn't seen it all a hundred times at least before,' said Harry, as he dragged him along.

'Why are you in such a hurry, Harry?' asked Edward. 'used never to be in a hurry.'

'We never took any ladies to church before,' said Harry; 'that's why, if you must know.'

'So sorry to keep you waiting, Miss Price,' he said; 'but I could not get Edward along.'

'We have not waited half a minute,' said Edith. 'I was not aware that we had waited at all till you said so.'

And so they walked back to Lupus-street, Edward again bringing up the rear with Mary, and Harry walking in front with Edith. And Harry talked to Edith of her plans, and she said she had tried so hard to go out as a governess, and had seen lady superintendents and directresses of homes for governesses, and educational agents, all without effect.

'It seems very hard to get any situation till one has had a situation, and established one's character,' said Edith.

'Why, at that rate,' said Harry warmly, 'you can never get one; for if you can't get one till you have had one, how in the world can you ever get one at all?'

'It seems very like it,' said Edith. 'And then, I must say, some ladies with large families are not very liberal. I suppose they can't afford to pay their governesses better. But the last I saw wanted me to take the exclusive care of six little girls, and to teach them English, French, German, Italian, music, and the elements of a good liberal education, for what do you think?'

'I am sure I can't tell,' said Harry.

'Why, for nothing except my board and lodging the first year, ten pounds the second, and so on, rising ten pounds a year up to thirty pounds a year, at which sum my salary was to stop.'

'I never heard such an absurd thing in my life,' said Harry. 'You had much better stay as you are. You are worth much more than thirty pounds a year to stay at home and nurse your mother, and do nothing. I wonder what this liberal lady had to say in defence of such meanness.'

'She did not consider it at all mean,' said Edith. 'All she said was, that she was convinced the right and proper thing in education was payment by results. She was determined to carry out the government system of education in her own family, and not to pay her governess anything till she saw at the end of the year what she could do. She was a great educationist, she said.'

'I should think so,' said Harry, 'and at other people's expense—a way of being great which many people religiously follow. Do you know, I think this plan of going out as a governess all a mistake.'

'Yes,' said Edith; 'most of the educational agents said that governesses were a drug in the market. Whether they meant they were as nasty as physic, I'm sure I can't say, but one told me pretty plainly that I must expect to wait a very long time got a situation; and then he added, in a very confident

"We should expect, if we recommended you, and succeeded in placing you advantageously, a very handsome commission."

'Commission!' said Harry; and then he went on, 'But, after all, I suppose the man was right. He lives by recommending young ladies for places, and so he must have something for his trouble. Nothing for nothing in this weary world.'

'Don't say so, pray, Mr. Fortescue,' said Edith; 'the world is a very good world after all, and we at least, mother and Mary and I, may truly say that we have found kind friends in it who do everything for us and expect nothing in return.'

By this time they had reached No. — Lupus-street, and Harry Fortescue wished it had been at least as far off as the Temple; as it was, he had only time to say, in a joking way,

'O, but you don't know that some of these days we may not expect to receive our talent back with interest. I do not feel as if I had buried mine in the ground.'

So with hopes on Harry's part that he might see them soon again, and bows and good-byes from Edward Vernon, the young ladies went into their dingy lodgings, and Harry and Edward walked off to Mrs. Boffin's.

CHAPTER XLVII.

HOW THEY SPENT THE SUNDAY AT HIGH BEECH.

THE rest of that Sunday was duller than usual for Harry Fortescue. He was quite as dull as Edward Vernon; and as two dulls do not make one bright, they went about looking very much as though they were to be executed next morning. If Harry Fortescue had only dared, he would have gone back to Lupus-street after luncheon, and taken Edith and her sister to afternoon church—they were so unprotected. When he ventured on some such remark to Edward, Edward only replied,

'They were just as much unprotected before.'

'Yes, but we did not know it,' said Harry.

So, too, Edward Vernon, if he had dared, would have put himself into the train, and gone down to High Beech. If he had only known how welcome he would have been, in spite of E. P., both to Lady Carlton and Alice, he would have gone; but then he did not know it, and knowing or not knowing whether you will be welcome makes such a difference.

So the two walked in the Park, and dined at the club, and saw all the old fogies settling the affairs of the nation, and talking scandal of their neighbours, quite as spitefully as Mrs. Grimalkin and Mrs. Tabby over a cup of tea. Then they began to yawn, we mean after dinner, and had a smoke in the smoking-room, but somehow or other their cigars were tasteless; and resolved to go home and

have an early night, and Mrs. Boffin was astonished to find 'her gentlemen' back on her return from a Sunday outing which she had taken with a friend to 'Ampstead by the Underground Railway.

Nor was that Sunday very lively at High Beech. All the party appeared in High Beech Church except Count Pantouffles, who declared he should never hear the last of it if his director heard he had attended a place of Protestant worship.

'He has such power over me in the next world,' said Count Pantouffles, 'that I must not make him too angry in this.'

So Count Pantouffles stayed away, good Christian that he was; and if any one chooses they may quote this speech of his as a proof that there is a future state, in which virtue will be rewarded and vice punished. How he spent his time while the rest were away is not known. Perhaps in reading a French novel, as we have heard he always carried one in his portmanteau; perhaps in playing billiards; perhaps in smoking. But we may be quite sure that, whatever he was doing, it was not such an act of horrible wickedness, in his own eyes, as attending a Protestant service, he being a Roman Catholic.

However, they all got on very well without him, and no one regretted his absence but Mrs. Marjoram, who sighed and said, 'Perhaps, if the discourse were a good "arresting" sermon, the mark of the beast might have been washed off this Papist, and he might have become a lamb of the true fold.'

Lord Pennyroyal was as aristocratic and æconomic as usual. He never wore gloves because they were so expensive—an opinion which we are sure half the young men in the world will reëcho, and only wish they could dare to follow his example. But then they must remember that it is only a very aristocratic person who can fly in the face of the usages of society and escape censure. There is no reason to doubt, if Lord Pennyroyal had been a young man, he would have set the fashion of not wearing white gloves at a ball; and if he had been as popular as he was stingy, after that no young man or woman would have worn white gloves; and more than that, they would have wondered how they could ever have worn them, as if flesh and blood was not much more pleasant to touch than skin torn from the back of a kid. But then, you see, Lord Pennyroyal had never thought of setting the fashion in this respect when he was young, and now he could only protest in vain, for if a man is to make any converts as a prophet in the world of fashion he must begin young; an old prophet or reformer in that world would be as unsuccessful as the false prophets of Baal when they prayed against Elijah.

But to return to Lord Pennyroyal: he protested against wearing gloves by having only one pair a year, and by wearing them, if it can be called wearing, crumpled up in his left hand. So he appeared in church at High Beech, on the 5th of June 1870. He wore a very seedy Nichol's paletot, trousers to match, and one of the

cheap hats which, as we knew, he was about to barter away on Monday. Taking him as he stood, an old-clothes man might have offered him ten shillings for his attire; even then he must have thrown in his boots to clench the bargain. And yet Lord Pennyroyal looked every inch a lord. There was that nobility about him which defied alike the degrading effects of stinginess and shabbiness; and just as when you heard him prosing about subsoil drainage and sugar-beet, you could not help feeling that there was something grand and noble about him, so even in attire which would only have fetched in Rag Fair the sum we have named, you saw that Lord Pennyroyal was a man and a nobleman for all that. And this, no doubt, was the reason why Lady Pennyroyal, who really was the nicest woman in the world, was so fond of him. She had lived long enough with him to forget his little weaknesses, and to admire his noble nature when anything good was to be done. How different from some people whom we all know, whose eyes become more microscopic the longer they live with others, and end at last by being blind to their many good qualities, and as keen-sighted as lynxes to their shortcomings!

Sir Thomas and Lady Carlton looked what they were as they sat in the Carlton pew—eminently pleasant, genial, trustworthy people. Colonel Barker and his wife stole off to church before the others, as Mrs. Barker said it did not do Colonel Barker good to walk so fast to church, but really because she wished to have a little of her Jerry all to herself, to use her own words.

‘I have seen so little of you, Jerry dear, since we have been here, I wish we were safe back at home.’

‘The sooner the better, for my liking,’ was the colonel’s gallant reply.

Soon after them started Mr. and Mrs. Marjoram, or rather Mrs. Marjoram and her husband, much as you might say a shepherd and his dog, or an Italian boy and his marmoset. Mr. Beeswing said he was sure she was going to make him say all the hard bits in the Catechism on the way to church, and he certainly looked as rueful as any charity boy on a Sunday morning before he has repeated the collect. Florry and Alice and Lady Sweetapple went in a little knot by themselves.

‘There go the lilies of the field,’ said Mr. Beeswing. ‘Shall I come with you as Solomon?’

‘We are contented with our own glory,’ said Amicia; ‘and at any rate we have wisdom enough to last us till we get to church.’

But it was very little wisdom the three talked. They said little, but that little was all about E. P.; and Edith’s ears ought tingled just about the time of the second lesson in St just at that very moment Amicia had said, in redeclared she had reason to believe that E. P. w son, ‘It is just these harmless persons who

world, my dear. Who can tell what harm this Edith Price—for we all know that E. P. means a young lady of that name—who can tell what harm this very innocent person may be doing to each of us at this very moment?’

A speech and sentiment so literally true, that Amicia, when the revisers of the Bible have pulled the old text and canon to pieces—which we trust will be a long time first—ought to be added to Deborah as one of the female prophets.

And now they are in church. Mr. Rubrick was nearly as high as the incumbent of St. Barnabas, only he regretted that the ignorance of a rural population would not allow him to make the service as perfect as he could have wished. As it was, it was what Mr. Beeswing called ‘very near the wind;’ as near, we should say, as a cutter can get it, and that is nearer than any other craft. We do not object to it, but Mrs. Marjoram did, and she was a great authority.

‘How did you like it?’ asked Mr. Beeswing of that rigid lady, as they were walking back from church.

‘I call it a performance, and not a service,’ said Mrs. Marjoram, as Lady Sweetapple’s singing had been called by that name.

‘What is the difference between a performance to be served in church and a service to be performed, as the rubric says, in the same place?’

‘I am sure I don’t know,’ said Mrs. Marjoram. ‘You had better ask Mr. Rubrick.’

‘How did you like the sermon?’ asked the indefatigable Beeswing.

Now we cannot help saying that this was a very delicate question to ask, for, if you must know, the subject of Mr. Rubrick’s discourse had been the ineffable beauty of perpetual celibacy, and Mr. Beeswing’s question showed the courage of an early martyr in exposing himself to the lion. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to liken Mr. Beeswing to Don’t Care in the story-book, who, as is well known, met with the same fate as the blessed Polycarp, St. Ignatius, Irenæus, Clement, and a host of early martyrs.

‘Think of it?’ said Mrs. Marjoram; ‘I thought it disgusting. And before old married women with grown-up families, and young women who expect to be married, I say it was disgusting. I wonder Mr. Rubrick had the face to read out those bans.’

‘Do you believe in the millennium?’ asked the Socratic Beeswing.

‘I do,’ said Mrs. Marjoram, like a charity girl.

‘Then you ought rather to rejoice in sermons on perpetual celibacy, because if there were no marrying or giving in marriage, say from this very day, we should have this millennium in which you so firmly believe in about a hundred years.’

‘These are subjects which I do not care to jest about,’ said

‘I think Mr. Rubrick’s sermon downright & firmly in the millennium. You mayn’t be

to reconcile my opinions, but after all that is only what we find in all matters of faith.'

Amicia and the young ladies went back as they came, discussing E. P., and trying, in the case of the Carltons, to get Lady Sweetapple to remove the prohibition about mentioning Edith Price to any human being.

'We really ought to tell mamma,' said Alice, whose mind was much easier after Edward's reassuring expressions.

'I shall tell her,' said Florry. 'Girls ought to keep nothing concealed from their mother.'

'You really must not,' said Amicia—'not, at least, till Tuesday. I have a reason for wishing my secret to be kept till then.'

'Well, then, on Tuesday morning early,' said Florry.

'On Tuesday morning you may tell what I told you,' said Amicia; and as she said this she thought she had been very clever, for on Tuesday she should have seen Harry Fortescue, and reckoned fully on having him at her feet. You see she had faith in herself, this very clever descendant of the great house of Smith.

We have nothing more to tell of that Sunday at High Beech, except that it was quiet, calm, and pleasant. As different from that smoky London Sunday as heaven is from earth. They all went to church again in the afternoon, and heard another sermon, this time from the curate, on the Immaculate Conception. It was not quite the same in doctrine as the decree of the Roman Council on the same article of faith, but it was very like it—as like as two twins, or two apples, or two peas, or whatever else is not the same, and yet so like no one could tell the difference. If all this is a mystery to any one, let him go to High Beech, and confess—his doubts to Mr. Rubrick or his curate. They, no doubt, one or both of them, will explain the matter fully. Then they walked by the river, and saw the kingfishers feeding their young, as if it were not Sunday, and the big fish eating the little ones without remorse. They saw all animals and all nature breaking the Sabbath, and felt that they were men, and Christian men and women, whose natural instincts were restrained by respect for the holy day.

'That's the same kingfisher, I am sure,' said Florry, 'that Mr. Fortescue talked about.' And then she felt so happy at seeing something in which he had taken interest.

Amicia said nothing, but she felt almost as sure of Harry Fortescue as the kingfisher of striking a fish every time it made its dart, and she laughed at heart. From the river the whole party—for they were all out, the Marjorams as well—slowly climbed the hill towards the house, and there, under the very tree where Florry had drawn out that confession from Amicia about her father, they found Mr. Sonderling sprawling on the ground.

'Have you been to church, Mr. Sonderling?' said Lady Carlton when the first salutations were over.

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.



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